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THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

BY H. A. FRANCES.

What is the battle of life?
Ask the young boy at his play,
Who knows as yet no toil or strife,
But only is happy and gay.

The battle of life?—no hardship, no care,
Has left any trace on his brow?
Nor yet has he learned that all is not fair,
As every thing seems to him now.

What is the battle of life?
The boy has grown to a man;
He enters with zeal into toil and strife,
And conquer he will if he can.

"The battle of life, do you ask?" he inquires;
"With me the fight's just begun,
Full of hope, better prospects, of future desires,
I'll on till the victory is won."

What is the battle of life?
Ask him again—old and gray,
With deep-furrowed brow where toil and strife
Left their mark as he went on his way.

The battle of life, I think he'll reply,
Consists in so living, that when
The end of the contest for us draweth nigh,
By dying we may live again.

Ludwig, the Wolf: OR, THE PEARL OF GUELDRES. A ROMANCE OF THE OLDER TIME.

BY AGILE PENNE.

AUTHOR OF "ORPHAN NELL, THE ORANGE GIRL; OR, THE LOST HEIR OF THE LIVINGSTONES;" "THE DISCREET WARD; OR, THE FORTUNES OF A BOWERY GIRL."

CHAPTER I. THE ROBBER.

"Enhoven's walls are high,"—Ancient German Ballad.

The cathedral clock of Gueldres' ancient town had just struck nine. The grand square was full of people. In one corner stood an honest burgher and his wife, gazing with wondering and admiring eyes, upon the close ranks of steel-capped soldiery, that, at this unusual hour, were mustering in the square and attracting the attention of the good citizens.

"Ho, Hans Niccolo!" said a neighbor, addressing the burgher whom we have mentioned, "what is the meaning of this warlike array? Is it another war with the French?"

The worthy burgher addressed turned in surprise.

"Why, neighbor!" he cried, in astonishment; "do you not know they are going to fight the 'Wolf'?"

"The saints preserve them, then," returned the other, crossing himself piously; "I hope they will fare better than the other expedition did, for they left many a stout heart lying still and motionless before Enhoven's dark walls."

"Good neighbor Fried," said he who had been addressed by the other as Hans, "pray tell us the story of the robber, for I believe you are acquainted with all the particulars."

Quite a little knot of people had now assembled around the two worthy burghers, attracted by the conversation.

"Acquainted?" said he who had been called neighbor Fried, "by the mass! I am! I have a cousin who is in the Count's own guard, and from him I received my information."

"Tell us, good neighbor—tell us the story of the 'Wolf'!" and the little group of citizens, who inclosed the two, repeated the request of burgher Hans.

"I will, neighbors," said Fried, in a self-satisfied tone, conscious of his own importance. "You must know my story begins some ten years ago, at the time of the war between France and Spain, and when they selected Flanders as their battle-ground."

Our good Count, Arnold D'Egmont—whom may Heaven preserve!—with the Duke of Cleves, the Count of Harholt and other Flemish Princes, espoused the cause of our natural allies, the French. Albert, Count of Enhoven, then held possession of the castle and domain of that name; and when the Spanish men-at-arms came sweeping like a cloud of locusts over our land, and the golden grain of Brabant was trodden under the hoofs of the insolent invaders, Albert of Enhoven, to the surprise of all, broke his treaty of alliance with France and the Flemish nobles, and, with every man-at-arms that he could muster, joined the banner of Spain!

"The traitor!" muttered one of the burghers, deeply interested in the story.

"Right!" said Fried, pleased with the interest his tale was exciting; "he was a traitor, to league himself with the natural foes of his native land. Well, for a time the Spaniards, assisted by the false Count of Enhoven, were victorious everywhere. City after city opens its gates to them. At last the Flemish army formed a junction with the French, under the command of the great Duke of Guise. The allied force advanced and met the Spaniards near Bruges, and there defeated them with great slaughter. The Spanish army, or what was left of it, retreated in hot haste, leaving their ally, the Lord of Enhoven, to look out for himself. No sooner were the Spaniards repulsed, than every sword within our borders turned to punish the traitor in our midst. Albert of Enhoven took refuge in his castle, and close around it soon gathered the Flemish lances. The traitor, neighbors, was surrounded by a circle of fire, that hemmed him in, closer and closer every day. At last the castle was assaulted and taken by storm, after a most desperate resistance. Maddened by the loss of their men and the stout fight-



The battle-axe came down with crushing weight upon the helmet of Liderick, felling him to the ground.

ing, the Flemish leaders gave no quarter, and all within that fated tower were put to the sword; not a man escaped to tell the tale. Even Count Albert's son, a boy some fifteen years of age, perished with the rest."

"But this robber who now holds possession of the castle?" quoth Hans.

"Have patience, neighbor, I am coming to it," said Fried, with a dignified wave of his hand. "After the death of Count Albert, and all his family, of course there were no heirs. Therefore nothing was done to the castle, and it remained in the same half-ruined state that the soldiers left it after the night of the attack. But, some two years ago, just at the time of the war with Burgundy, when Charles the Bold brought fire and sword upon us, the tower of Enhoven was taken possession of by a small party of Free Lances, in the pay of Burgundy. They used the tower as a head-quarters, and gradually repaired it, until it was as strong as ever. The leader of the Free Lances was called Ludwig, and though he was young in years, yet he was a most daring captain. He ravaged the country with his little force, even to the gates of the city. His fame began to spread abroad. One by one, desperate soldiers of fortune—men who lived by the sword—joined him, eager to serve under so skillful a captain."

"Then he grew bolder. Hitherto, he had been content with stooping down from his perch at Enhoven on small bodies of our Flemish soldiery, or on herds of fat bees going to feed our armies; but, as his force increased, he unmoved our leaders with skillful dashes, midnight attacks. With his lances well mounted, he would suddenly—and when least expected—assail some weak point in our camp; dash in, shouting the war-cry of Burgundy, slaughter our men, and, by the time they got fairly awake and began to prepare for resistance, he would be off as suddenly as he came, carrying perhaps a half-dozen knights of rank with him as prisoners. And then, he even went so far as to attack the castles of nobles who were friendly to our cause. So daring, so desperate was he—for he never showed quarter

save it was to some noble of rank who would command a heavy ransom—and yet, so cunning was he in planning his attacks and in eluding pursuit, that he finally got the name of the 'Wolf' and hence, from the tower that he used as a refuge, they called him the 'Wolf of Enhoven.'"

"A desperate man, neighbors," said our friend Hans, with an ominous shake of the head.

"Ay, that he is," chimed in a chorus of assenting voices.

"And after peace was declared, and the Burgundian force retreated, to the astonishment of all, the 'Wolf,' Ludwig, remained in the castle of Enhoven. His lances now numbered some two hundred men, and, being skillful and well-trained soldiers, were a desperate force to cope with. Besides, the 'Wolf,' as a captain, had scarcely an equal in all Flanders. Our noble Count, Arnold D'Egmont, when he learned that the 'Wolf' still remained at the castle of Enhoven, and had not retreated with the forces of Duke Charles, sent a messenger with a flag of truce, to ask by what right he held the castle of Enhoven. The 'Wolf' made answer shortly that he held the tower by the right of might. The messenger returned and gave the answer of Ludwig, which much angered our good Count, for, as he had led the expedition which wrested the tower from the family of Enhoven, he naturally considered that if any one had a claim to it, it was he. So he dispatched another messenger, with a demand that the 'Wolf' should at once give up the tower and depart, taking his lawless band with him. Ludwig listened patiently while the messenger made known the bidding of the Count; then he smiled a grim smile, and said to the soldier: 'Go tell Arnold D'Egmont that, if he wishes the tower of Enhoven, he must come and take it.' A message so brief, yet so full of meaning, that he who runs might read it."

"When this answer was delivered to our noble Count, he waxed wroth, and swore a great oath by the 'Three Kings of Cologne,' that he would not only take the castle of Enhoven, but that he would hang the 'Wolf' to his knees. The Free Lances rushed to the rescue of their chief, and, in the confusion, the young soldier raised Count Arnold in his arms, bore him to a horse that, luckily, was near at hand, and, with the wounded and helpless man, escaped and reached the town in safety."

"A gallant deed!" cried Hans.

"Indeed it was, eh, neighbor?" said the little tailor to the burgher next to him. "I would I could have been there to have seen it!"

"Truly," said Fried, with a shake of the head, "it was a gallant deed. It needed something to cover the shame of the terrible defeat; for, of the three hundred sturdy soldiers that left the gates of Gueldres, to brave the 'Wolf' in his lair, hardly a hundred returned to tell the story of the slaughter. The 'Wolf' had won the tower and given his foes a terrible lesson. From that day to this, he has ever been a thorn in our side. He bears a deadly hatred to Gueldres, but why he should hate our city more than the others who are his foes, no one can tell; for, surely the terrible defeat he gave our soldiers should have satisfied him."

"Count Arnold has never recovered from the blow of the 'Wolf's' ax, I believe!" said Hans.

"No," responded Fried; "he has never been able to mount a horse since, and it is doubtful if he will ever lay lance in rest again. Still, he is not confined to his bed, although he is, at times, quite feeble."

"But, the young soldier?" questioned the tailor, pressing nearer, "who saved the Count—do you know how he is called?"

"Well, I should know him, neighbor," said Fried, proudly, "since he is my sister's son. The young soldier who saved the life of the Count, is named Liderick du Bucoq. He is now captain of the Count's body-guard."

"Du Bucoq?" said the fat tailor. "Did thy sister, then, neighbor, marry a noble?"

"Tut, man, be satisfied!" cried Fried, in a sharp tone. "Question no further. Curiosity sometimes costs men their ears. Have a care, then, and look well to thine, for thou canst ill spare them, though they be of a size befitting an ass!"

The crowd laughed and the tailor retired, discomfited.

"I have seen the youth," said Hans; "dost thou not remember, wife, I pointed him out to thee last Saturday, at mass, when the Count and all his court attended? He was the shapely fellow with the brown eyes and dark hair, dressed in a sable doublet, puffed with pink, who handed the holy water to fair Anna of Gueldres, daughter of Count Arnold."

"Yes, I remember," said the good woman, who called neighbor Hans her lord and master; "and she blushed, too, when his fingers touched her fair brow; and, as he saved her father's life, I trow it would be a goodly match should she wed the handsome fellow."

"Mistress Niccolo," laughingly said Fried, "you are like all your sex—over quick at matchmaking; but, stout Liderick is but a poor soldier, while Lady Anna is the heiress of Gueldres."

"Ah! love does not always pay regard to station and fitness," persisted Dame Niccolo, with all the obstinacy of woman, who, when they once take an idea into their heads, can not be reasoned out of it, right or wrong. "She blushed when his hand touched her temple, and if she does not love him may I never speak more!" thus rather illogically closing her argument.

"And should that happen," thought Fried, to himself, "what a blessing it would be to your husband!" But, he did not utter this thought aloud, as he had a high respect for Dame Niccolo's tongue, and had no stomach to encounter her in a war with that busy member; so he contented himself by saying:

"Tut! Dame! She was afraid the water would drop upon her gown. But, tell me, neighbor Hans," he continued, thus abruptly turning the conversation; "what is the meaning of all this warlike array? In truth, I am ignorant, as I have just returned from a visit to Ghent."

"Tis as I before told you, neighbor; they are going to fight the 'Wolf,'" answered Hans.

"Yes, but I see the banner of Cleves, and also of Hanault!"

"True!" said Hans; "tis a league of all the neighboring cities against the 'Wolf,' who is the common foe of all. He has grown so powerful, as to be the terror of both Flanders and Brabant. The league have determined to crush him if it be possible; and, as this is the nearest city to the robber's stronghold, all the troops have assembled here."

"Pray Heaven they succeed and exterminate the robber! He makes sad work of our poor goods when they pass within five leagues of his den."

"Yes," returned Hans, "and no later than three days ago, he seized a whole train of French wine, a present from the King of France, and intended for the good monks of Bruges."

"Indeed!" said Fried; "well, it makes but little difference to Ludwig, whether he be monk or layman that he robs."

"That is the truth, neighbor. When the good monks heard of their loss, they sent a brother—a most pious and holy man—to re-monstrate with these worse than heathen. And when the messenger told the 'Wolf' that it was a present from his majesty of France, and that, to rob them was to rob heaven, Ludwig laughed, and, filling a goblet of the very wine, asked if it was to be

with his doughty two-handed sword, which beat the 'Wolf' to his knees. The Free Lances rushed to the rescue of their chief, and, in the confusion, the young soldier raised Count Arnold in his arms, bore him to a horse that, luckily, was near at hand, and, with the wounded and helpless man, escaped and reached the town in safety."

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considered sacred because it was their property, and if that made it holy wine? When the good man said 'yes,' thinking that the robber would return it, Ludwig laughed again at the answer, and asked what the monks thought of him and his band, and if there was a chance that they might be saved. The good priest replied that there was grace for all. Then, said Ludwig, 'well keep and drink your holy wine, as it may effect our salvation. You and your brothers are too good sons of the church to murmur at any thing that may help to save our souls.' Then he drained the goblet and threw the dregs in the monk's face, bade him return to his convent and let the rest smell of his beard, as that was all of the wine that they would ever get.

Fried could not resist a chuckle at the story. He was not greatly in favor of the monks, and though he swore roundly by the 'Mass' and by the 'Saints,' yet in his heart he favored a new religion, which a certain Martin Luther was beginning to preach, and which was gaining many converts among the middle and lower classes.

'Farewell, neighbor,' he said; 'I must to my home for I am tired with traveling.' So Master Fried went home, while burgher Hans and his better half remained with the little knot of citizens to gaze upon the gathering troops.

CHAPTER II. THE SOLDIER.

Go we now to the palace of Arnold D'Egmont, count of Gueldres. We'll enter the private chamber of Arnold. It is fitted up in the rich and massive style peculiar to the age. Tapestry concealed the wall; and the heavy and oddly carved furniture, seemed like so many specters in the gloom; for the chamber was lighted but by a single candle of perfumed wax placed on a little table, massive though like all the others set, even in its littleness. By the side of the table was a quaint old arm-chair.

In the chair sat a man, perhaps forty-five, yet wearing the pale look of a confirmed invalid. His head was covered by a small black velvet cap. Should we remove the cap, we should discover the cicatrice of a fearful wound, extending clear across one side of the skull, and from which the hair had been cleanly shaven.

The man was Arnold D'Egmont, count of Gueldres; the wound the one he received from the battle-axe of the 'Wolf' nearly two years ago, and from which he would never entirely recover.

By the side of the Count stood a young man—by his dress, one would say a soldier, as it consisted of the high riding-boots, common in that age; dark trunks and a buff leather jerkin, over which he wore a light breastplate, of Milan mail, wrought in the famous rings, that though almost as light as leather yet were as pliable as silk, and defied alike the point of the sword or the bullet of the arquebuss. Stout leather gauntlets protected his hands; by his side he wore a long double-edged rapier, about which there was no tinsel or gaudy glitter to please the eye, but it was finished plainly in steel. A dangerous weapon in a practiced hand. A dark green bonnet, ornamented with a plain silver clasp, yet one exquisitely chased and by a master's fingers. Simple as it seemed, had the soldier bought it it would have taken the best part of a year's pay, for it was a masterpiece of Italy's famous son, Cellini. The clasp came from the fair hands of Gueldres Pearl, as she was termed—Anna D'Egmont. The ornament held a single heron's plume, and the bonnet hung by a hook to his girdle.

The soldier was tall and fair to look upon. Though barely twenty-five, he had one of those well-built, well-proportioned figures, that gave promise of great strength—a promise that was not here belied, for few in Gueldres could cope with the dark-haired, brown-eyed Liederick du Bucq, for it was the young soldier we have been describing who had saved the life of Count Arnold.

'Liederick,' said Arnold, evidently resuming a conversation which had flagged for a moment. 'I think you know I love you like my own son.'

'My lord,' replied Liederick in his rich, musical voice, 'I can never repay the benefits that you have heaped upon me. I was only a simple man-at-arms, and now I am the captain of your guard, and honored by your friendship.'

'Speak not of benefits. I owe my life to you. You dragged me, at the risk of your own, from beneath the robber's ax. That debt I fear I can never repay.' Arnold paused and looked closely into the young soldier's face, as though expecting him to speak.

Liederick saw the glance, guessed the meaning hidden in the Count's words, and cast his eyes toward the floor, while the traitor blood flushed red into his cheeks and forehead.

'Did you not hear my speech, Liederick?' questioned the Count. 'I said I fear I never can repay the service that you have rendered me.'

'My lord—' stammered the young soldier.

'Why not speak out?' cried Arnold. 'Is there a way by which I may repay thee?'

'My lord, you have guessed my secret,' asked Liederick, raising his eyes to the Count's face.

'Yes; you love my daughter. Is it not so?'

'It is the truth, my lord!' said Liederick, honestly.

'And she loves you?'

'My lord, I would not say that!' replied the soldier, quickly.

'And yet it is so. I do not blame you. Hearts are hearts, and love is love, find them where you will. Liederick, freely would I give Anna to thee, but for one thing, and that is—' and he paused in his speech.

'I know what you would say, my lord. I am basely born. It is my misfortune, not my crime.'

'I know that well, Liederick; but, think not that with me would it weigh a single moment, but the husband of Anna in time to come will rule over Gueldres. The voice of my people will be heard. The bar sinister stains your escutcheon. Think, then, what al. my town would say should I give thee my daughter?'

'My lord,' said the soldier, sadly, 'I feel that you speak the truth, and that the lady Anna can never be mine. I will crush the passion from my heart, and never more think or even dream of it.'

'Then, by the mass, you must die, for you never will forget it in life,' said Arnold, kindly. 'But, Liederick, I did not speak of

this to wring your heart and give unnecessary pain. Do you remember the story of the Italian, called Carmagnola, the Commander?'

'No, my lord; yet I have heard of him as being a brave captain.'

'He was so,' returned the Count. 'He was a peasant boy, and longed to be a great soldier. He joined the ranks of a band of Free Lances, rose, step by step, until he led the armies of the proud Republic of Venice, and was styled by friend and foe alike, 'The Invincible.' Do you mark my meaning? The fact of his low birth was concealed by the fame of his deeds, and few remembered in the great commander the peasant lad.'

'My good lord,' cried the soldier, eagerly, 'you would bid me hope?'

'Yes; even now you are a favorite with in our city, and men speak of you as being the rising soldier of our town. Gueldres is fond of warlike deeds; they would have a soldier to rule over them. Distinguish yourself by a victory, and no one will murmur when I give you my daughter.'

'Oh, thanks, my lord!' cried Liederick. 'My life is at your command to prove my gratitude.'

'Now for my plan. The men-at-arms are gathering in the square, preparing to attack this robber of Enhoven. Many noble gentlemen are there; the Duke of Cleves, the Count of Hanault, and others of note of Flanders and Brabant. The allied force have requested me to choose a leader for the expedition, and whom think you that leader will be?'

'My lord, I can not guess,' replied the soldier.

'The bravest and best lance in Germany; yourself, my stout Liederick!' said the Count.

'I?' said the soldier, almost dumb with astonishment.

'None other!' said Arnold. 'Exterminate the 'Wolf' and you win my daughter's hand. All our town will be wild with joy, for this our own presses sorely upon the goods of our worthy burghers where'er they come within his reach. They will hail thee as a second Guise, if thou art successful, and call down blessings upon my head for giving them such a son-in-law.'

'But will the nobles, who form the league, consent?' said Liederick, doubtingly.

'Remember, my lord, some of them are old and tried soldiers, to whom I am but a boy in arms.'

'There's not one of them but has met the 'Wolf' and been well beaten by him; therefore, if thou can conquer him, 'twill place thee above all,' said Arnold. 'I have no fear for thy success. I have arranged it, too, so that no petty jealousy of the other nobles can impair thy chance. Such jealousy there might be should they know that it was the simple soldier, Liederick du Bucq, who leads them. So, at my request, a certain noble prince—whose title is second to none in our land—will lend thee his armor, and then, with your valor down to conceal your face, just before the starting of the expedition, I will present you as its leader. They will think you are the noble, and joyfully follow you. Then, in the moment of victory, you can declare yourself.'

'Thanks, my lord! I owe all to your bounty.'

'And to you, my good soldier, I owe my life. But, in payment for that service, I shall give you my daughter,' replied Arnold. 'And now, in two hours more, the expedition starts. Perhaps there is some one, Liederick, to whom you may wish to say farewell? If so, I will detain you no longer. But remember, within two hours return here and arm yourself for the fight. Here is your helmet.'

'I shall not forget, my lord!' and the soldier, taking the helmet and placing it upon his head, bowed low, and left the room. Liederick took the broad stairway that led to the garden in the rear of the palace.

Gaining the garden, with his heart beating high with joyful hopes, and the future beaming all bright before him, he made his way to a small portal in the side of the palace, and knocked twice, in a peculiar manner. The signal, for such it was, was soon answered, and in another moment Anna, of Gueldres, was folded in the embrace of her lover.

The garden was dark, for the moon, though full, was hid by passing clouds, and rode rapidly across the sky, giving visible warning of a coming storm.

The lovers could hardly see each other's face, save now and then, when the moon shone clear; but their hands were clasped together, and the fair head of Anna, with her pure, blue eyes and hair, the color and sheen of the waving wheat, reposed gently on the manly bosom of the stout soldier.

'Why did you not come before?' she asked. 'Truant! Are there other eyes besides mine that have charms for thee? They say the burgher's daughters are pretty, though they call me 'The Pearl'; perchance my stout soldier has lingered in the square to gaze on some fair lass, forgetting her who waited for him.'

'Why, Anna, my heart's love! thou knowest I care for thee and for thee alone. No other glances have charms for me; but I have been with thy father, and he recommended the interview with Count Arnold. And when he told of the expedition against the 'Wolf,' her face grew palid, and then, when told of her father's promise, and the prize he should gain, should the chance of war place victory within his grasp, the white face grew rosy red, and the eyes sparkled with joy as she hid her blushes, by nestling her head like a little bird on the breast of her lover.

'But you will be in danger!' she said. 'Beware! The arms of the 'Wolf' are strong, the tower of Enhoven not easily won.'

'Fear not, dear one,' was his caressing reply, as, with his stout arms, he drew her nearer and closer to him. 'Thy love is with me. I fight for thee, and that thought will be my buckler and my shield.'

Oh! the rapture of that moment for the stout soldier, Liederick! Forgotten now was danger; forgotten now was all but the sweet girl he held within his arms. He could feel the beating of her heart against his own—that heart that throbbed for him alone. Enjoy that happiness, Liederick, for true happiness is rare in this world of trouble, and lasteth not; so enjoy it while thou hast it within thy grasp!

The moon struggled through a dark cloud, and the light for a moment lit up the garden; then the cloud, as if angry, covered the 'Queen of night' again with its dark veil.

By the light of the moonbeam Liederick saw on the ground near to his side, the shadow of two armed men. He turned, and his hand sought the hilt of his sword; too late, for a battle-axe, which had been already

raised by the taller of the strangers, came down with crushing weight upon the helmet of the soldier. Down went stout Liederick to the ground, stunned and bleeding. Anna fain would have screamed, but the second stranger threw a cloak about her head, and thus muffled her voice. As she felt the rough arms placed rudely upon her, her senses failed, and she fainted.

'Ho! ho!' discordantly laughed he of the battle-axe, 'you would seek the 'Wolf' in his lair, but he has saved thee the trouble, and sought thee! Stand, Liederick du Bucq, thou wilt not ride with the lances of Gueldres, when they march for Enhoven's tower.'

'The maiden has fainted!' said the other stranger, who was apparently one of the men-at-arms of Count Arnold, but was, in reality, a spy and follower of Ludwig.

'So much the better,' replied the 'Wolf,' for it was the famous Lord of Enhoven in person. 'We can depart with her unmolested. Wrap the cloak around her.'

The robber, who answered to the name of Stuffed, obeyed.

'But the soldier?' he questioned.

'Leave him to bleed and die. 'Tis not likely that he will recover. Few men do so, after once feeling the ax of Ludwig. Come; we must to horse, and then for Enhoven to make preparations to receive these gallant gentlemen that would test the strength of Enhoven's tower.'

(Concluded next week.)

The Dark Secret: The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OVER THE SEA.

'And now I'm in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea;
And why should I for others grieve
When none will sigh for me?'

—CHILDE HAROLD.

ONE week later, and the bark 'Sea Gull' left New York harbor, bound for 'England's Isle.' The passengers stood watching the fast-receding shores of 'Uncle Sam,' and standing off among them was the tall, gallant form of Captain Alfred Disbrowe, gazing thoughtfully, sadly, on the land he was leaving.

Down the river, on to the wide ocean, swept the stately ship, and slowly and gradually the shores began to recede.

'Adieu to the new land!' he said, waving his hand; 'farewell to bright America.'

'A long farewell,' sighed a familiar voice behind him, and turning suddenly round, he stood face to face with Jacinto!

'There was a pause, during which Disbrowe's eyes were fixed steadily on his face. The boy's dark eyes fell, and the blood mounted to his brow.

'You here!' said Disbrowe, slowly; 'this is a most unexpected pleasure.'

'I did not know you were on board,' said Jacinto, timidly. 'I—I thought you were going to remain in New York.'

'And I expected you would have returned with your friend, Captain Tempest,' said Disbrowe, coldly.

'He is no friend of mine,' said the boy, quickly. 'I never knew him until I met him accidentally in Liverpool, and finding he was to sail the next day, took passage in his ship. That is all.'

'Have you not seen him since you left Fontelle?' said Disbrowe, suspiciously.

'No,' said the boy, earnestly; 'not once.'

'You have heard what has happened since?'

Jacinto lifted his large, black eyes, and Disbrowe saw they were full of tears.

'Yes, and indeed I was very—very sorry.'

'I have no doubt of it.'

His tone of proud, bitter endurance went to the heart of Jacinto, and the tears fell fast from his eyes.

'Oh, Captain Disbrowe, I am sorry for you. Indeed—I am sorry for you.'

'Keep your pity, my young friend, until I ask for it,' said Disbrowe, with a look half-disdainful, half-cynical, 'and dry your tears. I really don't require them.'

'Oh, Captain Disbrowe, what have I done to you? I never—never meant to offend you; and I am so sorry if I have done so. Oh! if you only would believe me, and not treat me so coldly,' said the boy, clasping his hands fervently.

Disbrowe glanced at him slightly, for a moment, and then looked out over the wide sea.

'My good youth, how would you have me treat you?—clasp you in my arms, and salute you on both cheeks à la Française? Not any, thank you!' he said, coolly.

The boy looked down, and his lips quivered slightly.

'I never meant to offend you—I never did! You hate me, and I—I would die for you!'

He turned to go. Disbrowe thought of the time he had saved his life at the risk of his own, and a pang of self-reproach smote his heart. He started up, and laying his hand on the lad's shoulder, said, kindly, 'Forgive me, I did not mean to hurt your feelings; but the truth is, I am moody, and out of sorts, and just in the humor to quarrel with the whole world. Come, Jacinto, after all that is past and gone, we will yet be friends.'

He held out his hand, with a slight smile. The young Spaniard caught it in both his, and raised it to his lips, while his dark cheeks were hot and crimson with some secret feeling.

'And so you really like me, my dear boy?' said Disbrowe, half-puzzled and half-touched, and thinking involuntarily of little Orrie.

'Oh, yes!' exclaimed the boy, lifting his sparkling eyes fervently to the handsome face of the young Guardsman.

'Yet I do not know why you should—I have never done anything as I am aware of to merit any affection from you.'

'That would be loving from gratitude, senior. Do we never love any save those who have done something to merit that love?'

'Well, I don't know—if you were a woman I might understand it, but as it is—well, never mind, I am glad you do like me, and we will not puzzle ourselves trying to discover the reason. 'Never look a gift-horse in the mouth,' you know. We will account for it on the principle that scapegraces, and those who least deserve it, are always best beloved, and so *sic etia*!'

'Love is an impulse, and despises com-

mon sense. The young god is always painted blind.'

'Which accounts for the desperate mistakes he makes sometimes. But, my lad, there is a subject painful to both of us, but on which I must speak, now or never! I mean the scene I saw that evening going to the library. You know to what I allude?'

His face flushed slightly, as he spoke, and as quickly grew pale again.

'Yes,' said Jacinto, looking straight before him; 'and I have often and often since wished to explain what I saw you misunderstood.'

'Well, speak out freely, do not fear that I will flinch from the stroke.'

'There is no stroke to fall. We loved each other like brother and sister—nothing more.'

'Nothing more! Are you sure?' said Disbrowe, turning, and looking searchingly in his face.

'No, nothing more,' said Jacinto, lifting his dark, reproachful eyes. 'Oh, Captain Disbrowe, how could you think so?'

'Such things have occurred before.'

'And you really thought for a moment that she could love a boy like me, in the way you mean?'

'I thought so for a good many moments, my dear fellow. I wronged her—I wronged you both; and I am sorry for it now, when it is too late.'

'Not too late, senior. I am certain she hears and forgives you.'

'And you, my boy?'

'I have nothing to forgive.'

'Thank you! I was she angry with me that day when I left?'

'No, only grieved and hurt. Your words went to her heart, because—'

'Well?'

'Because she loved you, Captain Disbrowe.'

Both paused, and the fine face of Disbrowe was dark with sorrow and remorse.

'And I never knew it till it was too late. Oh, Jacinto, why does every good gift come too late in this world?'

There was a dark, passionate dejection in his tone that startled the boy. He softly laid his hand on that of the young man, as if to recall him back to himself.

'I wish to Heaven I had never set foot in America, Jacinto; I wish I had been dead and in my grave before I ever thought of coming here. She might still be alive, and I—'

He paused, and a hot, bright tear fell on his hand. He glanced first at it, and then at the boy, with a strange look.

'What, for me! don't shed tears for me, my boy. I am not worth them, and never will be, now. Oh, Jacinto! the world is as empty as a nut-shell.'

Again that sad, reproachful look in those dark raised eyes.

'And is there no one in all this wide world who loves you still? Oh, Captain Disbrowe! are all dead with Jacquette?'

The young man made an impatient gesture.

'Of what use is love, when we can not love in return? I never loved but her, and now she is gone forever! Sadly true are the words of the Wise Man, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit! You are not ill—are you, Jacinto?'

'Oh, no!'

He was leaning over the side, his dark eyes fixed on the far-off horizon; and some thing had went out of his face at Disbrowe's words, like a light from a vase.

'Did she tell you she loved me, Jacinto?'

he asked, after a pause.

'There was no need—I saw it.'

'It was more than I ever saw them—blind idiot that I was!'

'Lookers on, they say, see most of the game. And she would not let you see it, because she was high and proud; and she knew you—she thought you were bound to another.'

'Ah! and that was the reason, that—'

'Memory of a lady
In a land beyond the sea.'

And because I was bound to one, I lost the other! As if one smile from Jacquette were not worth a thousand Normans.'

He spoke more to himself than to his companion; and he did not observe that the hand that lay in his had grown deadly cold, and was hastily withdrawn.

'Did she ever tell you she was married?'

he asked, after another pause.

'No.'

'Did she ever account for the strange nightly music?'

'No.'

'And you never asked her?'

'No.'

Disbrowe looked at him, a little surprised at his laconic answers.

'You are ill, my boy! You are deadly pale—sea-sick, perhaps.'

A faint smile at the unromantic hint broke over the boy's face for a moment, and then as quickly died away.

'No; I am not sea-sick—I never am—it is nothing. Is she—is she—buried?'

'Yes!' said Disbrowe, shading his face for an instant, as the memory of that lonely grave in the cold, dark vault rose before him.

'Poor Jacquette!' said the boy, softly, his eyes again filling with tears.

'Do not speak of it more, Jacinto; it is like vinegar upon niter to me. Now for yourself. May I ask what is your destination?'

'I am going direct to London.'

'Ah! then we will be fellow-travelers—that is my destination, too. Have you friends in London?'

'Yes; I think so.'

'Your birthplace is Seville, I think I heard them say?'

The boy bowed, with averted face.

'You must be my guest in London, my dear fellow. I will show you all the sights worth seeing, from the Tower to the Thames. Come, what do you say?'

'That I thank you very much; but my business is pressing. I can only remain in your great modern Babylon two or three days; so, you see, much as I should like to accept your kind offer, I must yet decline.'

'Well, I am sorry; but, as it can not be helped, I suppose we must be resigned. Two or three days is but a short time to see the wonders of London. I should like to have taken you to old Fontelle and Disbrowe Park—two country seats of ours—and shown you what the 'homes of Merrie England' are like. Lord Earncliffe would have liked you immensely, and so would her ladyship.'

'You are too kind. Indeed, I wish I could accept your invitation; but at present it is quite impossible. Some day I hope to be more fortunate.'

'You will always be welcome, my boy—don't forget that. And I will not forget

that you once saved my life at the risk of your own. If I seemed to do so for a time, it was when I unjustly accused you; and I believe grief, and anger, and jealousy, made me half a maniac. All that is past now, and we will let 'bygones be bygones.' Shall we not, Jacinto?'

'With all my heart. You make me very happy by saying so.'

'Then that is settled. And there goes the last glimpse of the bright land we are leaving. I wonder if we will ever see it again, Jacinto?'

'Heaven knows! I hope to do so.'

'I hardly think I ever will; and yet I like America, and those American people. But sunny Spain and merry England are dearer still; and so we can have a sigh for the land of Columbus, and in the same breath, chant the old prayer: 'God bless our own land, that lies beyond the sea, for it is like no other.' Say amen to that, Jacinto.'

'Amen, from the bottom of my heart. It is home, and doubly dear after the land of the stranger.'

'Yes; see the shores fade away in the horizon; and now we are on the 'wide, wide sea.' Once more a long, a last farewell to America.'

And with a smile he turned away, and descended to the cabin.

One dark, unpleasant evening, two months later, just as night was falling over London, a hackney-carriage drew up before a large hotel, and two travelers sprang from it. Both were wrapped in cloaks; for, though the month was August, the evening was raw and chilly, and they wore their hats pulled down over their brows. One was slight and boyish, the other tall and dashing, with a certain soldier-like air and bearing.

'And so we part here, Jacinto?' said the elder of the two.

A slight red came into Disbrow's pale cheek.

"And his daughter—is she there, too?"

"No; Miss Macdonald is abroad—has been for some time—but is expected to return, shortly."

"Indeed! Where is she?"

"Can't say, positively. Somewhere among the wilds of Scotland, I think. Of course your marriage must be postponed now?"

"Of course," said Disbrow, with a promptitude that rather surprised his friend. "There can be no two ways about that. To-morrow morning I will start for Disbrow Park."

"Do so, by all means. Lady Margaret intends spending the winter in Italy, I believe, and can not leave home until she sees you. I will go down with you, if you choose."

"My dear George! the very thing. I would have asked you to do so, only I feared it would be too much, even for your good nature, to bury yourself alive at Disbrow Park. How are all my friends in London?"

"All quite well, I think—some have gone abroad, and some got married. A *propos* of nothing—how did you like your visit to America?"

"Well enough."

"What is the place like?"

"A fine country—you should see it."

"I don't know. I never care for wandering beyond the precincts of the Serpentine; the world beyond that is only half-civilized. Do you like the Yankees?"

"Very much—never saw people I liked better."

"Particularly clever and wide-awake, I have heard—the men all smart, and the women all handsome. Well, I don't know but I shall take a trip over there, some day, just to see for myself. It's such an old story doing the Grand Tour, as they call it—like the journey nurses give children to Banbury Cross, it's slightly monotonous. But you look terribly used-up, my dear fellow; had you not better retire?"

Disbrow, or, more properly, Lord Earncliffe—but the former name is too familiar for you and I to give up, dearest reader—arose, and Lord Austrey rung the bell. A servant appeared, and showed him into an elegantly-furnished apartment, where the greater part of the night was spent, not in sleeping, but in pacing up and down his room, lost in his own thoughts.

After an early breakfast, next morning, the two young peers were in their saddles and ready for their journey.

"And now for Disbrow Park!" exclaimed Lord Austrey, as they dashed off together at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NORMA.

"It was not this in other days we met; Hath time and absence taught thee to forget?"

NEVER fell the sunlight on a fairer English homestead than the one on which streamed the warm, golden sunshine on the bright September morning of which I write.

A large, irregular old building, not unlike a modernized castle, or a French chateau that had taken a serious turn, peeped through the clumps of trees, and thick, clustering, dark-green ivy. There were great windows of stained glass, and projecting gables, and odd rookeries, and an old Gothic chapel at one end—very pretty and romantic-looking indeed. There were broad, sunny glades, with deer frisking about, and long laurel walks, and shady avenues; even the trees met, and intertwined their long, green arms overhead—delightful walks and mighty suggestive for lovers. There were a couple of fountains, too—these two twisted serpents on one side, spouting forth tall jets of water, and bronze lions on the other, with gold and silver fish sporting in the glittering waters. There were the sunniest of smooth meadows, the most velvety of lawns, the brightest of terraces, overrun with ivy, roses, jasmine, and honeysuckles. There was the most fragrant and brilliant of pastures, bright with flowers of every hue and size, from the wee, modest English violet, to the grand, flaunting tulip, passion flowers, and tall, creamy magnolias. There was a mimic lake, lying like a great white pearl in a setting of emeralds, where snowy water-lilies floated, and on whose silvery bosom majestic swans, of dazzling whiteness, serenely swam. Altogether, it was like a little glimpse of fairy-land, a peep into Arcadia; yet, had you asked the gate-keeper in his pretty little lodge beside the great gate, he would have told you it was only Disbrow Park.

The young lord of the manor, in a rich Turkish dressing-gown, and black velvet smoking-cap, with a gold tassel, lay on the low sofa, at full length, looking very handsome and very lazy. Being left to his own devices—Lady Margaret having gone abroad—he was alternately regaling himself with smoking a meerschaum, reading the morning's letters, yawning, and looking out of the window. None of the epistles seemed to have the power of fixing his attention; for, after glancing lightly over them, he crumpled them up, and threw them into a *chiffoniere*—which had, no doubt, been placed there for that purpose—blew a few whiffs of his meerschaum, crossed an exquisitely beautiful little grayhound that lay on the carpet beside him, and leisurely went on with the next, which shared the same fate. At last he lighted upon one that aroused his wandering thoughts; for he started as he read it, and a look of angry annoyance and chagrin passed over his face. As he finished, he uttered an impatient ejaculation, and, springing to his feet, began pacing rapidly up and down the room, after his custom, when angry and excited.

At top of the door disturbed his irritated soliloquy. "Come in," he called; and Mr. Norton, *his valet de chambre*, "confidential," etc., made his appearance.

"Lord Austrey, my lord, has—"

"There!—Lord Austrey can announce himself," said that individual, springing up the stairs, two or three steps at a time. "That will do, my friend; make yourself thin as air as soon as possible."

Mr. Norton bowed, and went off; and Lord Austrey flung himself on a lounge opposite Disbrow.

"Now, then! I don't see why talking things case shouldn't pay in my case as well as in other people's. Earncliffe, my dear fellow, what's up? You look as if you had lost your best friend."

"What's up? Read that!" said Disbrow, angrily throwing him the crumpled letter.

"No need to ask."

Lord Austrey leisurely smoothed it out, and glanced at the superscription.

"To the Right Honorable, the Earl of Earncliffe."

"Humph! that's all right enough. Now for the inside."

"My dear Alfred!—You will be pleased to hear that Norma arrived in town two days ago, and is at present visiting her cousin, Mrs. Tremaine, at her residence, in Berkeley Square, where, no doubt, she will be delighted to see you at the earliest possible moment."

"Yours truly,"

"RANDALL MACDONALD."

"That's all. It's on the short, sharp and decisive principle. And now, my dear Earncliffe, let me congratulate you!"

"Congratulate me?" said Disbrow, looking at him. "For what, pray?"

"There's a question!" exclaimed Lord Austrey, appealing to society at large. "The man asks what he's to be congratulated for, when his lady-love, who has been away for—how long is it, Earncliffe?—comes suddenly back, and will be delighted to see you at the earliest possible moment"—in fact, hangs like a ripe plum, ready to drop into one's mouth!"

"I do not believe in ripe plums ready to drop into one's mouth!" said Disbrow, dryly. "I had rather have the trouble of climbing, and plucking one for myself."

"Unreasonable mortal! you might get a severe scratching in the attempt."

"I would risk it. The greater the trial, the greater the triumph, you know. The consciousness of gaining a victory would more than repay me for the trouble."

"You remind me of the old adage: 'Fly love, and love will follow thee; Follow love, and love will flee.'"

Now where, oh most fastidious youth, can you find one more beautiful, more accomplished, more wealthy, more fitted in every way to become Countess of Earncliffe, than this same Miss Norma Macdonald?

"Nowhere, perhaps. But, supposing I am not inclined for having a Countess of Earncliffe, at all, what then?"

"Why, you never mean to say you are going to perpetuate single-blessedness all your life?"

"Upon my word, I don't know but what I shall, if I can get my head out of this noose, I mean."

"Why, the man's crazy! Gone stark, staring mad, as sure as shooting! Do you feel any violent symptoms coming on, my dear fellow? or do you feel like the country swain in the play, 'Hot and dry like, with a pain in your side like? Hadn't I better ring for Norton and the smelling-bottle? I'm afraid you've had a rush of insanity to the brain lately, and that reminds me—this is the full of the moon, isn't it? Where's the almanac?"

And Lord Austrey started to his feet, the very picture of consternation.

"Pshaw! Austrey, don't be a—I mean, don't talk nonsense."

"Nonsense, man! I never was so serious before in my life. I should hope I had cause. When a man goes and sets his what's-their-names?—heart's best affections, and all that sort of thing, on his friend, and then sees him a fit subject for Bedlam, it is time to be serious, I think. Give up Norma! What the unmentionable-to-earl-pollite has inspired you with that notion, most unhappy youth?"

"Austrey, I wish you would be serious for five minutes," said Disbrow, springing up and pacing up and down. "I really and truly do want to get out of this business, if I possibly can. You are the only friend I can decently consult on the subject; and you happen to be a relative of mine, I don't mind speaking to you about it."

"A fifty-fourth cousin, or something of that sort—ain't I? The first tremendous shock is over, and I have steeled my heart, and nothing can move me more. Hand me that bottle of *volatiles*. Now I'm prepared for the worst; so make ready—present—fire!"

"Austrey, will you stop your nonsense, and listen to me?" exclaimed Disbrow, in a rage. "Can't you be sensible for once in your life?"

"Well, there—I'm done!" said Austrey, adjusting the pillow more comfortably under his head. "I'll promise to be as sensible as is consistent with the intellectual faculties nature has gifted me with. Now, state the case. You want to get clear of this contract of yours—do you?"

"Yes."

"But why—what's the reason?"

"Well, I'm in no hurry for marrying for half a dozen years yet, for one thing; and Miss Norma Macdonald does not suit me, for another."

"You're engaged to her—are you not?"

"Yes; but it was an engagement of her father and Earncliffe's making."

"So! and the Honorable Alfred Disbrow and Miss Norma had no voice in the matter?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I made no objection. There is a wide difference between a portionless younger brother and a titled earl, you know, and—"

"And the heiress that would have suited Alfred Disbrow to a T, doesn't exactly come up to the mark for the Earl of Earncliffe, I see?"

Disbrow colored slightly.

"It looks rather villainous—doesn't it? But the fact is, I never loved Norma as a man should love the woman he intends to spend his life with; but you know the proverb, more expressive than elegant: 'Needs must when the devil drives.' And I was confoundedly hard up, over head and ears in debt to the children of Israel; and, in fact, there was no help for it, then. Now, however, I have money enough; and upon my soul, Austrey, I can not tell you how repugnant the idea of this marriage is to me."

There was an almost passionate vehemence in his tone. Lord Austrey looked at him, and slightly smiled.

"I say, Earncliffe, you didn't leave your heart behind you in America, I hope?"

Disbrow turned white for a moment, even to his lips. His friend saw a mistake, and instantly regretted what he had said.

"My dear fellow, I beg your pardon! I only spoke in jest; I had no idea—"

"Enough," said Disbrow, waving his hand. "Say no more about it. But now that you have heard the case, as you call it, what am I to do? I want to get rid of this engagement without hurting the young lady's feelings."

"I wonder if she cares for you?"

"She used to, I think. Time, though, may have changed her in that particular."

"If it hasn't, I'll be hanged if I see how you are to get rid of your fetters. You can't go and tell the poor girl you don't care about her, and ask her to cancel the bond. Women are privileged to do such things, but men, unhappily, are not. You would have that old fire-eater, her father, shooting you first, and suing you for a breach of promise after."

"It would be a terrific pitch of fatherly vengeance, to shoot me, and make me pay damages, too," said Disbrow, with a slight laugh. "Heigho! there is nothing for it, then, but yielding to Fate and Miss Norma Macdonald."

"Yes, supposing she is in love with you still; but if, in the mean time, she has gone and splashed her affections on somebody else—eh?"

"Oh, in that case, all would be as right as a trivet. I couldn't think of forcing a young lady, you know, against her will."

"Decidedly not. The man who would do such a thing would deserve to be, for the rest of his mortal life, a mark for the finger of scorn to poke fun at. Well, now, suppose I go in and win there, fascinate the young woman, get a rich wife, and clear you, thus obliging myself and my friend at the same time. Q. E. D., that's demonstrated, as that old fool, Numskull, used to say at Oxford."

"My dear Austrey—you?"

"My dear Earncliffe, me—decidedly not; nobody else. I flatter myself I'm equal to the task," said the young man, glancing complacently at his handsome face and figure in the glass.

"And you really intend to try to captivate her?"

"I most really and emphatically do."

"Et puis?" said Disbrow, laughing.

"And then I will make her Lady Austrey; her father wants to get her a title, and I don't see why Austrey is not as good as Earncliffe. To be sure, you are worth a score of thousands a year, and I about enough to buy kid gloves and pale ale; but he has the gift, and he might as well let me spend it as anybody else."

"A very delightful scheme, my good friend; and therefore, of course, quite impracticable. Old Macdonald has set his heart on marrying me to his daughter; and do you suppose he will coolly stand by and see you win the golden prize? I don't doubt your success with the lady; she has been shut up like a nun all her life, and will be a regular Eastern bride for exclusiveness; and, being of the intensely-romantic order, will be ready to forget me and love you at a moment's notice; but ah! her father is another affair!"

"What a bore fathers are!" said the young lord, in a tone of displeased criticism. "I don't see why pretty girls need have such things at all. So Miss Norma's romantic—is she? Her idea of a lover, I suppose, is derived from those charming pictures, where the scenery is all balconies, roses, and curtains out of doors, and where a gentleman in tights and a guitar is urging a lady on his knees to go to sea with him in something that looks like a floating cradle, or a hearse amusing itself with a sail. Well, so much the better; she will be all the easier managed, and handsome ladies are privileged to be silly. As to the governor, he's very fond of his daughter—isn't he?"

"Passionately—quite dotes on her."

"All right, then! She'll fall in love with me, that's settled, obdurate parent will insist on her marrying you. Lady weeps, flings herself at his feet, and bathes them with her tears. Obdurate parent melts—calls to poor but strictly honest lover, who is always on hand, places lovely daughter's hand in his, and says: 'Take her, you dog! Lovers fall at his feet. Obdurate parent stretches out his hands, rolls up his eyes to the ceiling, and apostrophizes the skies: 'Spirit of my sainted Elizabeth, behold my happiness—bless you, my children! I may be happy?' And then the curtain falls, and there it ends."

"No," said Disbrow, laughing, "then comes the farce, consisting of a henpecked husband and thirteen tow-headed Normas and Georges."

Lord Austrey made a grimace.

"Ugh! don't mention it! Call that a farce—a tragedy, more likely. Well, but really and truly, and soberly, Earncliffe, I don't see why this plan should not work."

"We can try it, but I confess I am skeptical. Will you come with me to town?"

"Certainly! when do you go?"

"We may as well start now, I suppose. It will help to kill time, and that, itself, is no trifling consideration. For though the *dolce far niente* is pleasant enough for once in a way, yet there is such a possibility as having too much of a good thing. So I will order horses at once."

He rang the bell as he spoke, and gave the necessary commands, and then arose to divest himself of his dressing-gown, and don the coat and pants of out-door life, while Lord George Austrey went off whistling "Hear me, Norma," to make a few alterations in his outer lod also, (if the expression be allowable). How the sad, plaintive air recalled Fontelle and Jacquetta to Disbrow!

Next morning, at the earliest possible hour that fashion would permit, our two young peers of the realm, in faultless morning costume, "got up" as Lord Austrey complacently remarked, "regardless of expense," placed their patent-leather boots on the aristocratic doorstep of the Tremaine mansion. A porter, quite as aristocratic as the doorstep, admitted them to a sumptuous drawing-room, and left them to themselves.

"I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls," hummed Lord Austrey; "silence and solitude this. I wonder how long Miss Norma will keep us waiting."

Scarcely had he spoken when the door opened, and a short, rollicking little woman, all smiles and dimples, came in.

"My dear Lord Earncliffe, welcome home! we were all very sorry, indeed, to hear of your loss, but such things must be expected in this life. Good-morning, Lord George; it is quite an age since I have seen you. What have you been doing with yourself lately?"

"Rustling at Disbrow Park, Mrs. Tremaine, admiring the beauties of Nature, and all the rest of it, you know," answered that young gentleman.

"And leaving all the young ladies to wear the willow, you naughty boy," said Mrs. Tremaine, who was a distant relative of Lord George's, and privileged to talk to him as she pleased. "Positively at Mrs. Desmond's card-party the other night, they were every one asking for you, and went feebly about, like so many drooping lilies, when they heard you had left town. It was quite heart-rending, I assure you."

"Really now! I wasn't aware I was such a lady-killer. I must endeavor to counteract my many fascinations for the future, I see, in mercy to the tender sex."

"You are hardly looking so well as when I saw you last, my lord," said Mrs. Tremaine, turning to Disbrow. "You are quite pale and thin. Do you not think so, George?"

"All the more interesting, Mrs. Tremaine. Young ladies admire that sort of thing, I have heard. Let him keep on a low diet for a fortnight or so, and read the 'Sorrows of Werter' for an hour every day, together with a small dose of 'Paradise Lost,' and I'll bet my diamond ring against a ducat, that by the end of that time he'll be able to play the 'Starved Apothecary,' and have every female woman in Berkeley and Grosvenor squares, not to speak of Piccadilly and the West End, over head and ears in love with him."

"Thank you," said Disbrow. "I had rather be excused. I hope Miss Macdonald is well, Mrs. Tremaine?"

"Quite well—she will be here in a moment. How did you enjoy your visit to America, my lord?"

"Very much."

"How is Mr. De Vere? I knew him when we were both young, and we are now, and we were great friends. You visited him, of course?"

"Yes, madam; I spent some weeks with him. He is very well."

"And you really liked America? It is not much like England, I suppose. I must be a strange country, I think, where all classes are on an equality, negro slaves and all. Dreadfully barbarous, I think. I shouldn't like it at all."

Before Disbrow could reply, the door opened, and Norma Macdonald, the object of all their schemes and plottings, entered—the fair fiancée of Lord Earncliffe.

She was tall and slight, and peculiarly graceful in form, with a complexion of snowy whiteness, unrelieved by the faintest tinge of color, save in the full, rounded lips. Her hair was of a bright golden hue, and was worn in a pretty silk net, something like the present fashion; but instead of the blue eyes that should have accompanied that pearly face and pale-gold hair, her eyes were large, lustrous, and intensely dark. The fair hair and complexion she had inherited from her Scotch father; the dark eyes and romantic nature, from her frail and giddy French mother. A dress of dark-blue silk, set off to the best advantage her peculiar style of beauty; and very lovely and very graceful indeed she looked—so much so, that Lord Austrey wondered inwardly at his friend's insensibility, and felt that a prize like this was well worth even his while to try for. Both gentlemen arose upon her entrance, and Disbrow had to acknowledge that seldom had his eyes rested on one more lovely. He thought of Jacquetta, wild, spirited, daring, bewitching; and she seemed like the dark-hued, brilliant passion-flower of her native land, to a shy, fragrant violet, this pale, gentle English girl.

She dropped her large black eyes, and laid her lily hand for a moment in theirs, murmuring a few words of welcome to both, and then retreated to a sofa. Still and reserved she looked, but perfectly easy and self-possessed; yet, as she sat down, there was just the faintest perceptible tinge of pink in those pearly cheeks, called there by some inward feeling.

"I did not know you were in London, my lord," she said, quietly. "I understood you were at Disbrow Park."

"I was, until yesterday. I heard, then, you were in town, and so called."

"So, then, I am indebted to Norma for the honor of this visit," said Mrs. Tremaine; "but, of course, I might have known you would never have called to see your old friend, but for a fairer magnet."

Disbrow aroused the old lady by some gay compliment, and Lord George began chatting with Norma—"drawing her out," as he afterward informed Disbrow, "to see what she was made of."

"And so you have been rambling all summer, too, Miss Macdonald, like our friend here? While he was doing the savage tribes of North America, you were roving through the land of kilts and porridge, 'o'er the muir among the heather.'"

"Come, my lord, speak respectfully of the land of rivers and mountains. Remember, I am a staunch Scotch lassie."

"Oh, your nationality is not likely to be mistaken, while you are called Miss Macdonald. By the way, is Mr. Macdonald in town?"

"No—papa has gone over to Boulogne on business for a few weeks."

"All right," replied Lord George: "the coast is clear—but faith! I begin to fear the young lady is no such easy prize as I thought her."

"And you have been away, too—have you not?" asked the young lady.

"Oh, only out to Disbrow Park! Splendid place for doing the *dolce far niente*, as Earncliffe calls it. What does that mean, Miss Macdonald? It's a regular Castle of Indolence, where the sun shines from one year's end to the other, and the very dogs are too lazy to bark."

"Indeed! I hope you have not caught the infection, my lord!"

Before Lord Austrey could indignantly repudiate any such notion, Mrs. Tremaine, who had been earnestly conversing with Disbrow, exclaimed:

"Oh, I am certain Norma knows! Norma, is that portfolio of Emily's in your boudoir? As Lord Earncliffe has just come from America, I want to show him that American scene you and Emily were trying to finish yesterday."

"My dear aunt!" exclaimed the lady, rising in evident alarm.

"Nonsense! nonsense! My dear lord, she is so bashful about such things, you would never know how well she can draw, if I did not show you. I will go and find it."

For one moment Miss Macdonald stood as if about to follow after her; but meeting the strange eye of Disbrow, she relinquished her design, and sunk back in evident agitation on the sofa.

"How cruel of you, Miss Macdonald," said Lord Austrey, "to wish to deprive us of the pleasure of looking at the work of your fair hands! I am sure both Earncliffe and I will be delighted to criticise the drawing, and point out its defects."

"How very gallant! I presume you are about as good a critic as I am an artist. But, indeed, I would rather aunt would not show you this. Emily was reading an American novel the other day, and attempted to sketch a scene it described, and I assisted her, and I am afraid Lord Earncliffe, who has been over there, will laugh at our poor efforts."

"How can you suspect me of any thing so shocking, Miss Norma? Ah! you ought to see those American scenes and draw from life. I am certain, if you are a lover of Nature, and have not quite outlived all your old enthusiasm, you would be delighted with them. If you only could see Fontelle!"

"Fontelle!" exclaimed Lord George. "Is there a Fontelle there, too?"

"Yes—my uncle's residence; and the very moral, as my old nurse used to say, of Fontelle Park—minus the park. Well, my dear Mrs. Tremaine, did you find the drawing?"

"Yes, my lord; here it is."

She handed him the drawing, and he uttered an ejaculation of amazement as he looked at it. For it was the "Mermaid," and the scenery around it to the very life! There was the river, the shore, the long, straggling, deserted road, the solitary inn, and the hills and woods in the distance. And there, too, out in the river, was the low, dark schooner of Captain Nick Tempest, as he had seen it the first evening he had ridden that way.

"Why, what is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed, looking up; "that is the Mermaid Inn for a ducat!—that is the Hudson river, and that schooner is the 'Fly-by-Night,' as sure as my name's Earncliffe. Why, Miss Norma, are you a magician?"

She laughed as she met his eyes, but her fair cheeks were crimson.

"Not exactly! But you are laughing at me, Lord Earncliffe! Do you mean to say that poor sketch is like any thing you have ever seen?"

"To the very life! I have looked on that very scene dozens of times."

"Something, perhaps, slightly resembling it?"

"No; that, as it is to an iota, without a shadow of difference. Some one must have described this to you, Norma?"

"Oh!" said Mrs. Tremaine, anxious her own daughter should share the credit, "Emily commenced it from a description she read from a book—probably the scene was laid in that part of America where you were. Norma assisted her to finish it, only."

"It is an odd circumstance, any way. I wonder what Mr. Rowlie would say, if he knew two English ladies had been sketching his inn?" And Disbrow laughed at the idea.

"Who is Mr. Rowlie?" asked Lord Austrey.

"Oh! a particular friend of mine—keeps that inn you see there—a glorious old fellow he is, with the nicest little wife! Shall I tell you all that picture wants, Miss Macdonald, to make it complete?"

"Oh yes! by all means! What is it?"

"Well—a rider before the door, horse-whipping an elderly individual with the most villainous face you can possibly draw; while a boy as handsome as an angel, and dressed like a stage brigand, interferes to keep the peace. You will have a striking scene from life, then."

"Striking!" exclaimed Lord George. "Faith! I should say so—a pretty subject, that, for Miss Macdonald's pencil!"

After a few more remarks on the subject of the sketch, both gentlemen arose to go. Lord Austrey and Mrs. Tremaine were conversing together in one part of the room, while Disbrow was taking his departure with Norma.

She turned to him with an agitated face, as he arose to go; and without looking up, said, hurriedly, and with a heightened color:

"Lord Earncliffe, I have something very important to say to you in private, and as soon as may be. When can I see you again?"

Her evident agitation, her downcast face, and hurried voice amazed him.

"At any time you please. I am always at your service, Norma."

"Then this evening—are you engaged?"

Saturday Journal

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The Greatest Indian Story Ever Written!

Mr. Albert W. Aiken's
NEW ROMANCE,
THE RED MAZEPPA;
OR,
THE MADMAN OF THE PLAINS.

A WILD, STRANGE STORY OF THE TEXAN PRAIRIES.
Will commence in the coming number of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, to whose columns lovers of what is best in American fiction have learned to look for surprises. Following so soon upon the best of all Capt. Mayne Reid's productions, now in the full tide of its success in our pages,

THE RED MAZEPPA
offers a fine contrast with the noted Captain's work, for while laid, in scene, like it, in Texas, it is yet so wholly unlike it in character, incident and motif as to bring out the strong qualities of each author with great distinctness.

THE RED MAZEPPA
is, indeed, a figure of power, wholly new to our literature, who, from her first appearance (for the wild rider is a beautiful young woman) enchains attention with almost a painful interest. From the very first appearance of the mad rider we have brought into immediate prominence

THE NOTED COL. DAVY CROCKETT,
who, throughout the book, is one of its most active elements of interest. In his commingling character of hunter, scout, trail-hunter, Indian-fighter, devoted friend and oddest of all old wits, he adds a most pungent seasoning to the story. Then we have, as collateral or direct elements of interest,

Gilbert Vance, the Young Mustang;
The Dread Madman of the Plains;
Silver Spear, the Prairie Princess;
Ponce, the Mexican Landowner;
Giralda, the Mexican Heiress;
The White Mustang;
Lope, "the Panther";
Etc., etc., etc., etc.

The story, as such, is literally loaded with mystery, and involves, in addition to its open action of danger, conflict, adventure and personal contact, a train of mysterious circumstances, which lead the reader into mazes of speculation and doubt, only to have all culminate in a climax as surprising as it is pleasing and impressive.

Our Arm-Chair.

A Warm Attachment.—A lady reader, whose pen has done graceful work as contributor to the weekly press, gives us, in the following paragraph, some idea of the attachment she has formed, in a literary way:

"I look too anxiously for the coming of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, and when the mails are slow—as is sometimes the case—postmasters in general, and those between Michigan and New York in particular, are a depraved set!"

Somewhat unreasonable, but pardonable under the circumstances! If all our lady readers are as exacting, we shall be placed in a critical position when women make the laws, for then they will surely compel us to publish the SATURDAY JOURNAL as a daily. Doubtless it is that fear which impels us to give the "cold shoulder" to woman's suffrage—who knows?

Our Dramatic Authors.—The great local success of Mr. Bartley T. Campbell's drama, "Through Fire," has added to his already admirable fame as a dramatic author. It lately had a "run" in Pittsburgh, equaled only by Jefferson's "Rip Van Winkle." Mr. Campbell's new drama, "Peril," is now in preparation at the Chestnut Street Theater, Philadelphia.

Mr. Albert W. Aiken has just returned, for a season of rest, from his starring tour through the West, in which his company has been eminently successful—probably the most successful of any dramatic corps which went out from New York, the past year. Mr. Aiken plays only his own dramas. He has in preparation a new piece, for his second "season," that will well sustain the great popularity of his "Witches of New York."

It gives us great pleasure to chronicle these successes by our own authors. Both of the gentlemen named being yet quite young men, give splendid promise for their future.

Our Laughing Philosophers.—New York city was recently treated to a lecture by our "FAT CONTRIBUTOR," (A. M. Griswold.) A crowded audience listened to his discourse on "Injun Meal," and enough laughing was done that evening to last the people for a month.

Speaking of him a correspondent says: "The first number of the 'Fat Contributor's' Recollections of Artemus Ward is worth any amount to a person having the blues. It is funny enough to make a Quaker meeting-house smile."

Funny men are not as plenty as blackberries—as every newspaper editor knows. The SATURDAY JOURNAL has been singularly fortunate in securing the exclusive services of such laughing philosophers and droll narrators as "Fat Contributor," "Washington Whitehorn," "Beat Time," "Joe Jot, Jr.," etc., etc.—every one of whom is a very genius of geniality and humor. They all are winning a most enviable popularity and richly merit it.

The Right Spirit.—A contributor who has the good sense to try again when a manu-

script is returned as "unavailable," thus expresses himself:

"I will always feel pride in pleasing the proprietors of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, who have done more for the young writers of America than any other. Even a failure to meet your approval is a spur to greater effort, and your courtesies, both as publishers and editors, has met with, before this, even higher commendation than any that I can give."

This is in the right spirit. We deserve no special thanks for our treatment of this or any other writer. It is our way of doing business to treat all correspondents as friends; and if, at any time, we do return a MS., or don't pay any attention to a letter, or seem curt in our notices, it is simply business—not involving the slightest personal feeling. So, dear contributors, however disappointed at times you may be, don't frown at us, nor at the fate which has apparently dealt unkindly by you; but do as the writer above has done, try again!

Albert W. Aiken, whose portrait we give on the eighth page of the present number, although among the youngest of the authors of America, has now won a position of eminence conceded to be second to that of no writer now engaged upon our Popular Weekly press. Though his advent and success have been sudden, the rapid succession of such novels as "The Wolf Demon," "The Winged Whale," "Overland Kit," "White Witch," "Scarlet Hand," "Heart of Fire," "Witches of New York"—all prove how rich is his invention, how fertile his fancy, how versatile are his powers of combination and construction; and how unlikely he is to write himself out—as so many authors have done—may be inferred from a perusal of his new romance, **THE RED MAZEPPA**, which we herewith introduce to our expectant readers. Mr. Aiken is in the prime of his powers, and promises long to cater for the vast audience which, through the columns of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, he has created for himself.

NEVER FEAR.

WHAT is the use of fearing what failures will overtake us in what we attempt? We leave many a good deed undone just because we don't think success will crown our efforts. Does it do any good? Better look in that lexicon "where there's no such word as fail," and the world will look ten times brighter to you. Think of the many failures the Atlantic cable met with ere it proved of use and benefit to mankind. Don't you suppose they had for their motto—these men who joined America and England together—"Never fear?" I do; and I not only believe it, but I know they carried that precept into practice. I wish we had more such go-aheaders in this world.

I am sure many a young fellow is remaining single to-day, because he hasn't the necessary courage to ask the important question for fear of a refusal, and so they meet and part, he wishing he had the face to ask her to share his lot in life, and she wishing he would do so, until they become most uncomfortable beings to behold, for of all the disagreeable sights to me is this lovers' dilly-dallying.

Never fear, young man! You can't expect the girl to do all the courting; neither can you expect her to ask you if you'll have her. That isn't the fashion now; but there's no knowing what will happen when we get our "rights." But, I hope they won't make us all obey such a law as that, for I won't obey it. I'd rather die an old maid. Young men possess too much fear in our society, and then if we don't give them any encouragement, they are cold and unimpassioned; but, if we do lead them on in the hope of having the question popped, they'll style us "forward."

Never fear, girls. You know we can not please everybody, so let love take its own course; but don't have a love courtship, and when he asks you to name the day, don't put it off until several years hence. The sooner you get married, the more years of married life you'll have. Isn't that logic?

Never fear, young man, that you'll lose the estimation of the true men and women of this world by refusing to lead a fast and intemperate life. Those are not true friends who induce you to do so, and the sooner you cut their acquaintance the better for you. Young men, you say you love our sex, and would do all in your power to please us, and Eve's going to say a little word to you, just as she talks to brother Tom sometimes. You may have heard that we prefer the society of fast young men. We do not. I speak for my sex. Such foolish ideas ought to have been exploded long since. We don't want you to talk to us on horseback nor to have you heed the flashy remarks some of our sex sometimes disgrace themselves in making, viz: "Don't talk serious things to us, we'll soon tire of your company if you do." Let your remarks be sensible ones. You needn't fear that we can not converse on most all ordinary subjects. We are not so dull as not to understand the common words now in use, nor do we have to rummage over the dictionary after you have left, to find out what you really did mean?

Just hear me a little longer, are you those sharply-pointed scissors, or that formidable blue pencil, Mr. Editor, and let me tell those young persons who have found their productions "unavailable," to never fear, but to try again. It's all foolishness to think of going out to the barn and hanging yourself to a beam, just because you can not write well enough to get a hearing. If everybody was to do that, the population would be speedily decreased, and some of us would have to hang ourselves over several times.

Push ahead! You and I have got as good a right to try as any one, haven't we? and we are going to do it—eh?

Crosses may come,
And the world may look drear;
But print on your banner
The words, "Never Fear!"

EVE LAWLESS.

A CURIOUS INITIATION.

The initiation ceremony in some of our college secret societies, is very severe. In describing one of the most curious now used, no palliation is intended for the system of persecution called "hazing." As each freshman enters a secret society voluntarily, and for the purpose of enjoying the initiation of others, he can not complain if he receives rough treatment.

There is an old and venerated college which has seen the rise to greatness of many of its students. Its antiquity gives it poetic grandeur. Then, there is the old weather-stained belfry, and the bell, which recalls cold winter mornings when its ever-dead clangor used to arouse unwilling students to early prayers.

We hear a hesitating footstep coming up the college walk, and we see a new hat and general freshness of outfit, which denote the college freshman. According to established rules and precedents, he is expected to join the secret society, and unless he is remarkably obstinate, he submits to the force of custom.

One night he is introduced to a hall, with Doric pillars supporting the roof, and a ceiling of carved wood. This is the hall of mystery. It is nearly midnight, and the hall is dimly lighted, showing the dark oak paneling and carved work with a gloomy indistinctness, intended to be very depressing. In one corner there is a guillotine, with a coffin beside it; and, looking further, we see a headman's ax, and the monstrous form of a stuffed crocodile, which looks hideous in the dim light. A side door opens, and a long procession of students, dressed in masquerade costume, marches slowly in with six freshmen in their midst, who are blindfolded and pinioned. The students then form themselves into a hollow square, facing the center of the hall where the freshmen have been tied to chairs, the only ones in the room.

The dim light produces a fantastic effect on the long rows of steeple-shaped hats, deformed-looking false faces, huge heads, with here and there the costume of a woman, meant to personate Joan of Arc, but looking more like her effigy, owing to an ill-fitting costume.

On the high stage in front stands a tall man, who is called the President of the Society. The noise of shuffling feet subsides as motions to the assembly to preserve silence.

"Fellow students," says the president, tapping himself on a false nose, about seven inches long, "after our vacation, we have met for our annual sacrifice of innocents. All our arrangements are completed. That coffin which you all see in the corner, was the result of many deprivations of late sleepers. We hope that you will all appreciate the guillotine, which you have all observed—that pale-looking freshman had better not try to fear the hand from his eyes, as he will sacrifice him first. The committee would also say that they are satisfied that the knife of the guillotine will not work smoothly. However, if any accidents occur, we have a competent staff of medical students who will see that the life is extinct in all decapitated heads." (The six blindfolded freshmen appear nervous and uneasy.)

After this eloquent speech, there follows a wild revel of yellow coats, red flanneled legs, goggle eyes, projecting noses, retreating chins, displaced wigs, coats ripped down the back, perspiration, dust, coughing, and general confusion. Many students in their excitement, throw up their wigs instead of their hats, which gives them a singular appearance; some of them having light, yellow whiskers and black hair.

The first victim, still blindfolded, is seated on a wooden cart, similar to the pictures of carts which they use in Japan; with large wooden wheels, and much roughness of outline. Slats are nailed where the fire ought to be, and like all instruments of initiation they have an object—which is to cause the occupant of the cart to jolt, as though he was riding over a picket fence with each picket painfully prominent. After riding in this cart, until he looks as if he had been having a violent fit of ague, he is laid on a crimson table, as though he was going to have his leg amputated, or some other surgical operation performed. This is followed by the rumbling of a base drum and a crash—he disappears through the top of the table and falls into a tub of cold water, which has been concealed. He is then dragged to the guillotine, where his neck is placed on the block; but as the knife has a semicircular nick in its edge, large enough to fit his neck closely, he escapes injury, only receiving a severe fright, which he remembers years afterward with a cold chill. He strains every nerve not to appear frightened, but as the cold steel of the wicked blade fits his neck as though it had been pinned to the ground with a croquet arch, he turns pale and shudders. As this is the last rite, he is considered passed, and now has the privilege of seeing others go through the same performance.

SOCIABILITY.

Your sociable person is generally a very agreeable companion and one whom you seldom tire of. He's one of the kind of beings who never takes offense at what may be said to, or of him. If it be ill-natured, he'll say he deserves it; if the reverse, why, he can not imagine why people will manufacture such "whoppers" about him. When he gets up in the morning he has a "good-morning" for one and all. There are no black looks upon his countenance, and if he sees others who are not cheerful, he strives to make them so. If one is dull and possessed of "low spirits," he'll tell a funny story, and make you laugh until you scarcely know what you are laughing at, and wonder if there is not some potent charm he possesses to cheer up a melancholy mind. He makes himself "at home" in all sorts of company, and no party is thought to be complete without him. You've seen him, of course.

He does not patronize a physician much, for his sociable nature makes him jovial, and jovialness is conducive to long life and healthfulness. And how much happier he is to himself than those grave-stone-looking beings who have neither brightness, themselves, nor carry sunshine to any place they may visit. Why, the very presence of the latter always acts as a kill-joy to the pleasure of company! Your sociable person always reads the papers, finds the wittiest *bon mots*, and sprinkles them into his conversation so aptly that, even though you may have read or heard them before, they sound new and original. He doesn't touch on your weak points, which makes him popular with old and young.

When the conversation lags or grows tiresome, he is ever ready with some straight-off-hand trick or some illusion, so you see he is highly useful. He doesn't snap your postmaster up, when the latter does not give him a letter, nor tell him that there ought to be one. No, not he! He'll give a merry twinkle to his eye, and say, "Well, if you've got time, you can write me one, and it'll be all the same." The postmaster likes him and almost wishes he had a letter for him every hour of the day.

Doesn't this prove that your sociable man has friends? He's never disagreeable in his well-meant advice; he'll tell you the truth, but in a pleasant way, sugar-coating a bitter pill you might say, and his advice will be acted upon as quick as that of a surly man's will be forgotten.

It pays to be sociable. It saves doctor's

ills, and you can pass an undertaker's shop without wondering how soon you'll have to be measured for a coffin. Tombstone-cutters will not think of having your name to engrave on their monuments. He, who keeps to himself, has but few friends, because he is looked upon as morose and churlish; while your sociable man is not only well received but eagerly sought after. If you have tried both moroseness and sociability, you will discover how much more beneficial the latter is to the former.

F. S. F.

GOOD LIVES.

Some men, says one of our popular preachers, move through life as a band of music moves down the street, flinging out pleasures on every side, through the air, to every one, far and near, who can listen.

Other men fill the air with their presence and sweetness, as perfume of ripe fruit. Some women cling to their own houses like the honeysuckle over the door, yet like it, fill all the region with the subtle fragrance of their goodness.

How great a bounty and a blessing it is to hold the royal gifts of the soul that they shall be music to some and fragrance to others, and life to all!

It would be no unworthy thing to live for, to make the power which we have within us, the breath of other men's joy; to fill the atmosphere which they must stand in with a brightness which they can not create for themselves.

The divinity there is within us needs but the fostering care of love to make itself a part of our everyday life. The worst of men, the most vain and selfish of women, have their graces, which are very good and beautiful when the stains of a misdirected life are wiped off the mirror of their souls—and he or she, indeed, is a messenger of light who seeks, in precept and practice, to wipe these stains away.

Foolscap Papers.

A Terrible Combat with Burglars.

EVERY once in a while I have an opportunity of showing my bravery. I have an undaunted spirit, and the older I become the less scared I get.

Last night was very bold. Before going to bed I had every thing ready by the stove, so my wife could get up in the morning and make the fire without any trouble to me; this off my mind, and feeling at peace with all the world except those I owed, I sunk into an innocent slumber and was soon wandering through the United States Mint, occasionally putting a handful or two into my pockets, when my wife woke me up by whispering that there were thieves in the house. "Keep quiet, or they'll find out where we are," I whispered.

"They're out in the other room," said my wife, "what if they should come in?" "Well, my dear, calm your fears; I could overcome seven men iron clad, but as they can't take any advantage of me, let me get over in the back part of the bed against the wall."

"You'll do no such a thing," she rather peremptorily rejoined.

"Well, my dear, I am not in the smallest degree afraid of them. As you know just where the matches are, you may get up and light the lamp so I can see what to do if they should be so cruel as to come in."

But, she absolutely refused to do any such a thing.

"Well, my love," I whispered, "I am getting braver than ever I was. I fear that in a rash moment I may rush out there and get hurt; wouldn't it be well enough for you to prevent such a calamity by getting up and locking the door, and then hiding the key, so I can't find it in case I should take such a spell?"

"Get up and lock the door yourself," she said, and began to push me out.

"Wife, beware!" said I. "What if some of them are already in this room and should kill me as soon as I touched the floor?"

"Oh, if they should kill you I'd—I'd scream, I know I would!" Here my wife touched my face with her hand, and my face went under the covers. I was terribly astonished, but not frightened in the least.

"Don't get up and go out there," she whispered, for she thought I was going. I really had a notion to go, but then I had two notions to remain; so I reluctantly allowed the majority to rule and didn't go.

Then we heard one of them tumble against a chair in the other room. My wife said she must scream. I told her if she would let me get at the back of the bed she could scream, but that it wouldn't do for a scream while I was lying at the front, for I knew there were no less than eight thieves out there.

Still, I would have given any thing if the door had been locked, so I made a desperate effort and got on the floor and went straight for the door, but it seemed a good deal further off than usual, when, all at once, I discovered that the door had not been shut that night, and that I had gone through it and was in the middle of the other room, and there was a noise in one corner! If I had had an armful of shot-guns I would have run; indeed, a shot-gun itself would have run; but, getting back I didn't hit the door, it was so very dark; then I tumbled over a stove and ran my head through a looking-glass, thinking it was a window, and yelled "Murder!"

A door was near, and through it I went, locking it, and found myself in the pantry without any buffalo-ropes to wrap around me, with a room I don't know how full of bloodthirsty burglars between me and my wife! If my wife had been as devoted as she should have been, she would have sallied out and drove the miscreants off and rescued me. I had often heard that freeing was an easy death, and I knew if I should reach the back I would be cut all up into little bits of pieces by bowie-knives, so I nerved up myself and concluded to be brave enough to remain, freeze or no freeze.

When morning did come I thought it was somewhere in the middle of year after next, it seemed so long. I was so badly frozen that they had to open my mouth with a crowbar; nobody could get within three feet of me for fear of being frozen to death.

The real reason of my running is that when I was young I had both my legs broken, and the surgeon who set them made a mistake and set them by the clock, and they occasionally take freaks of running. As there was nothing to take, the burglars didn't take any thing.

As ever,
WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—Book MS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book, MS., and be sealed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the mails at "Book rate."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS.; and, third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, bearing off each page with its number, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their efforts only attention.—Contributors must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We can not use the following contributions, viz.: "Perilous Adventure among the Alps;" "The Outwitted Coon;" "A Dollar or Two" (probably a copy of the old song); "The Sunken Rock;" "The Faith of Love;" "Miss Thrice;" "Love, Marriage, etc.;" "Despair and Hope;" "The Midnight Attack;" "E Pluribus Unum;" "The Rogue I Loved;" "Keeping House;" "The Spirit of Job Jossip;" "An Old Maid's Reason;" "Perhaps;" "Struck in the Heart."

Will find place for "Invocation;" "Irreverence;" "Battle of Life;" "Witnessed by One;" "Linda's Discovery;" "Helen's Secret;" "The Place of the Ring of Crystal;" "Broken Faith;" "I would I were another;" "A Great Event;" "The Wedded Widow;" "Ninety Years Old To-Day;" etc.

Can not answer yet in regard to the two serials by Mrs. J. K. F. Her sketches we return.
M. A. There is no "regular price" for sketches.
DAVID D. The Desert Queen has been published in our book issue, under another title. The Revolutionary Story will appear in the coming issue.
D. F. B. The poem "Beautiful Night" comes to us, as original, from the person whose letter is inclosed to you. As we know the poem to be yours, we leave it for you to deal with the impostor.

FRANK LEE. We know nothing of the teacher of penmanship referred to. It is perfectly absurd, however, to talk of becoming a "proficient penman in five lessons."

Mrs. B. R. F. It is useless for authors to affix prices to their contributions. If we accept and use matter, it is at our own terms. A price given very frequently is the cause of rejection.

A. P. S. M.D. No stamps were inclosed for return of MS.

USE. Doubtless your father had some good reason for doing as he did. It is never wise to question a parent's authority unless it is very evident that the parent is in the wrong.

M. E. F. Have written you by mail. We may say to all authors that READLE & Co. never publish books for other parties. They purchase all MSS. which they use in their publications.

X. X. St. Louis. The gentlemen named do not write for the press. We may at some future day republish Mr. Aiken's great story, "The Wolf Demon." It is one of our most popular stories published in any paper in this country. It is impossible to end all stories with even volumes of the paper, as they "lap" one another in the order of succession.

W. J. B. The author spoken of is living.
PAT MURPHY. Texas is probably the State of richest soil, although, in proportion to its area, Illinois is no rich. The most fertile soil in this country are in the Rocky Mountain range in Oregon, and in Washington Territory.

A. W. T. The lettering you submit is excellent. You evidently have a taste for the pen. We can not use any of the samples, as we think our present heading about as neat and pleasing as any thing we could adopt.

K. K. K. Use Glycerine soap and tepid water. To remove freckles use a weak solution of Carbolic acid or lemon juice.

EXPERIENCE. Cull upon the young lady at her own home, of course.

H. L. K. We know nothing about the matter referred to in your note. If it is a quick medicine, beware of it.

N. S. Y. K. Revaccinate at least every seven years if you would be perfectly safe.

C. W. J. The volume "Boron Manganese," is sold by all booksellers. It is published at all prices.

A. S. Offer your apparatus to some druggist. He can doubtless make sale of it for you.

L. A. I. writes: "If the JOURNAL was printed in as fine type as the old 'Littell's Living Age,' it would not be able to read it at all." It never will sacrifice quality to mere quantity. Brevier or heavy-faced minion type is never used. The paper is of the best, clear, white paper, with good ink, make a very readable page.

GEORGE WAYNE. A handsome and fashionable style in shirt-studs, and a set of small gold rings encircling a tiny band of hair, belonging to a gentleman's wife, sister or lady-love.

JANE GROVES. The latest style of dancing cards, or programmes, is in the shape of a small book, bound in Russian leather, and with a pencil attached by a ribbon—that is for those who get up entertainments without regard to expense.

THOMPSON L. There are different kinds of how old a cigar should be before it is smoked. Cigars prefer a green cigar, while workmen in tobacco manufactories like to smoke a cigar when just made. Two or three weeks in this climate is long enough to dry a cigar thoroughly before smoking.

LAURA DUNCAN. Ladies are now changing the style of their morning wrappers, and making them loose and flowing, but not opening at the back. A deep flounce may be also added.

WINNIE FANCHER. Young ladies should be very careful regarding the sudden changes from wearing red and blue woolen stockings to fine lace and merino, for they make them take severe cold.

CHARLES WEST. The President has no right to pardon a State criminal out of a State prison. His authority in pardoning extends only to United States criminals; that is, those guilty of breaking the laws of the Federal Government.

DONOR. Diamonds may be worn by ladies upon all occasions of full dress. Fashions do not change regarding these precious stones, for they are in perfect taste when other jewels would seem affected. Coral can be worn in young girls, but seen out of place upon elderly persons. Pearls appear more frequently at weddings, and are those decidedly apropos. Jet was once the synonym of mourning, but afterward became a fashionable ornament for ladies not in mourning. It is yet much worn, but the cheap glass imitations of it have rendered it less a favorite.

GEORGE CONVERSE. High heels upon ladies' shoes were in use many years ago, but having gone out of fashion were not reinstated until some twelve years since, and now it is a fashion of the most fashionable. "French heels" are detestable and injure the feet.

BANES. There are more diamonds worn in America than in any other country of the world. The purest white stones are brought to the United States and here find a ready sale at their fullest value. Some of our heaviest diamond owners are those who speak most atrocious grammar; but, what of that?

STANTON DREW. Chocolate is obtained from the seed-beds of the cocoa, a plant indigenous to the tropical parts of America.

WINCHESTER. The human scalp should receive particular attention, for thus severe headaches can be prevented. Hate should not be worn so tight as to prevent the circulation of the air, as it will cause baldness. The Indians, who wear no hats, never go bald.

Mrs. GEORGE CURTIS. A teaspoonful of epsom salts added to a bowl of water, and swallowed by boiling, will greatly improve the starch.

MISS MARY PERKINS. To cut whalebone easily, hold it over the gas-light for an instant, and you can then clip it in two with the shears without difficulty.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

A BRACE OF STARS!

We have scheduled in, for early use, two fine serials by

A. P. MORRIS, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK CRESCENT," "WOODWIND," "FLAMING TALISMAN," ETC., ETC.

FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF "RED RAJA," "GRIZZLY HUNTERS," "KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," ETC.

Both very characteristic, and well calculated to attract notice.

CARRIE AND I.

BY LAURA GRAHAM.

Gayly down the stream we float
In our little painted boat;
Sunbeams on the mountain quiver,
Then glance downward toward the river;
Who is this sailing down the river?
Carrie and I.

The spray springs flashing from the oars,
The larks fly singing up the tide;
Silver-winged joy sits with us, too,
As merrily down the stream we glide,
Who is this sailing down the river?
Carrie and I.

Softly her small hand rests in mine,
And our two voices now are singing;
Joy! joy! this fairy hand of thine,
I own it—bold-like her voice is ringing;
Who is this sailing down the river?
Carrie and I.

A breeze blows out her silken curls,
Across my face themselves they fling;
I shut my eyes—oh, heaven on earth!
And dream 'tis the sweep of a seraph's wing;
Who is this sailing down the river?
Carrie and I.

Her May-blue eyes are beaming brightly,
And her sweet voice still wildly rings;
The song, if I remember right,
(Oh, sweeter than the lark's o'er sings,
While on her cheek the Danish gloves,
Is "Carrie's sitting down the river";
Now, who's this sailing down the river?
Carrie and I.

Millie's Merino Dress.

BY MATTHEW DYER BRITTS.

THERE was to be a grand concert in Elmville.

Now, there had not been a concert or any thing of the kind in Elmville the whole winter, and when the Musical Society announced an entertainment, everybody was thrown into a flutter, and great preparations began immediately.

All the milliners and dressmakers, yes, and tailors, too—for men like to "dress up" nearly as well as their fair sisters—were put upon double duty, and the merchants set almost distracted with demands they could not fill, for flowers, feathers, ribbons, and laces.

Pretty Millie Elgin smiled softly as she draped the shiny folds of her pure white muslin around her little figure, to see the effect.

"No stiff, starched ribbons for me," said Millie to herself. "I'll have it trimmed and looped with trailing wreaths of grasses and berries, and it will look so fresh and sweet. I wonder—" Millie did not finish the sentence, but a close observer would have seen the pink spots deepen in her round cheeks, as she thought of handsome Dr. Wells, and wondered if he would think her pretty.

He had not been quite so attentive of late, and Millie feared, from some things she knew, that he thought her nothing but a butterfly, not worth the thoughts of an earnest worker like himself. And on that night Millie hoped to win him back to her side, by making herself as attractive as possible.

It was an innocent little vanity, and I think she was quite pardonable.

Three days before the concert it turned exceedingly cold, and there was a heavy snow-storm. Millie walked up from the hall, where they were practicing, without her rubbers, and caught a cold, but it had hardly made her hoarse, at all, so she was not worried about her voice.

The eventful night drew nearer, and the evening before Millie tried on her pretty dress, and stood before the mirror to see the effect. Very lovely and sweet, indeed, was Millie, with her white shoulders and round arms, so plump and dimpled, and the soft, green grasses twining and trailing around her feecy dress. She felt the drooping wreath, which crowned the toilette, and turned smiling to her mother.

"Yes; it's very pretty, dear," said Mrs. Elgin. "But I feel almost afraid of that bare neck and arms with your bad cold. I wish you had made a thicker dress."

"Oh, mamma, it won't hurt me, and I wouldn't wear anything else for the world. Maybe it won't be so cold to-morrow," pleaded Millie.

So Millie fretted and worried till after dinner, and no change in the weather. Then good sense and regard for her mother's wishes got the better of vanity, and Millie walked resolutely up-stairs to her room, took one last, longing look at her dainty dress, and wisely putting temptation out of her way, shut it up in a bureau drawer, and went to her wardrobe to select another dress.

She took down a soft, rose-colored cashmere, at last, and set to work with her fingers to arrange it for the evening's wear.

Evening came, at length, clear, but intensely cold, in spite of which, at an early hour, the hall, where the concert was to be held, was filled to overflowing. At length the mystic little door leading to the stage was opened, and the performers thronged in to take their places. The buzz of conversation quickly hushed, and all eyes were turned upon them, and more than one bright pair opened wider as Millie walked across the platform.

But very sweet and lovely Millie was, with the rose-colored robes that fell in the soft folds of woven wool to her small feet, and one single golden star gleaming amid the down which surrounded her throat, and edged her loose sleeves. Her heavy brown hair was coiled and looped in a bewildering mass of braids round her dainty little head, and her sweet face was as fresh and pretty as a May rose.

Toward the middle of the concert was a short intermission, and Millie, with others, went off the stage to greet some friends in the audience.

Millie stood a little way in front of Sallie Clark's seat, when Sallie said, quite loud enough for Millie to hear:

"Do see Miss Elgin! Isn't she horrid, dressed that way?"

The hot blood rushed into Millie's face, paled, and flowed back as she heard the gentleman behind Sallie, whose voice showed him to be Dr. Wells, reply quickly:

"Why, I was just thinking Miss Elgin was the best dressed lady on the stage."

"But that thick, long-sleeved dress! It is simply ridiculous!" said Sallie.

"Miss Elgin has consulted health as well

as beauty," returned the doctor, coolly; "it marks her a young lady of good sense, and I should be glad to see others follow her example."

"Oh, if you are going to be her champion, I shall retire from the field," said Sallie.

And Millie, as she passed to the stage, turned and gave Doctor Wells a look of grateful thanks which he quite understood. After the concert was over, and she stood tying her little rigolette under her pretty chin, some one touched her arm, and she saw Dr. Wells again.

"I should like to walk home with you, Miss Millie. May I have the pleasure?" said he. And having received her assent, he offered his arm, and they went out into the snowy starlight.

"How cold it is!" said Dr. Wells. "Draw your mantle close, Miss Millie. Do you know I am glad to see you had the courage and independence to dress sensibly, and not risk your life by thin apparel in a cold concert-room?"

"But I came near doing so," said Millie. "It was hard to resist the temptation."

"Then you shall have the more credit for doing so," said Dr. Wells, gently.

"Will you let me thank you for taking my part?" asked Millie.

The doctor laughed. "You heard Miss Clark, then? I feared you did, and would feel hurt."

"I own I did, a little. But you applied the cure—Dr. Wells, I thank you very much."

"Shall I tell you why I took your part so quickly, Millie?"

"It is because I love you, dear. I have loved you a long while, Millie, and to-night I love you better, because you have shown me that you are sensible as well as sweet. Can you learn to love me, dear?"

"I think not," whispered Millie.

"But why?" persisted the doctor.

"We cannot learn what we know already, you see?" she whispered, shyly.

And then, ah, well, how can I tell what happened then? But I can tell that when Millie took off her rose-colored merino in her own room, she gave it a loving shake, with a happy look in her bright face, and said, softly:

"You dear old dress! I'll keep you as long as there's a rag left, for this night's sake, and I am not sure but you shall be my wedding-dress!"

Tracked to Death:

THE LAST SHOT.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

AUTHOR OF "HELPLESS HAND," "LONE RANCHER,"
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

"WHY COMES HE NOT?"

IF, on that night, Helen Armstrong went to bed thinking bitterly of Charles Clancy, there was another woman, who sat up, thinking sadly about him.

Some two miles from the gate of Colonel Armstrong's plantation—near the road that led past the latter—stood a house of humble aspect, compared with the dwelling of the planter. It might have been called a cottage; but the name is scarcely known in the South-western States. Nor yet was it either log cabin, or "shanty," but a frame house, with walls of "weather boarding," planed and painted, the roof being of "shingles." It was a class of dwelling occasionally seen in the Southern States—though not so frequently as in the Northern—inhabited by men in moderate circumstances, poorer than planters, but richer or more genteel than the "white trash," who live in log cabins.

Planters they were in social rank, though poor; perhaps owning three or four slaves, and cultivating a small holding of land, from twenty to fifty acres. A frame house vouched for their respectability, while two or three log structures at the back represented barn, stable, and other outbuildings, told of their being land attached.

Of this class was the habitation spoken of as standing two miles from the gate of Colonel Armstrong's plantation. It was the home of Charles Clancy; and inside it was the woman whose thoughts about him on that night, we have described as being sad. He was her son—her only child—and she his only living parent, for Charles Clancy's mother was a widow.

Her widowhood was of recent date. She still wore its emblems upon her person, and carried its sorrow in her heart.

Her husband, a decayed Irish gentleman, had found his way to Nashville, the capital city of Tennessee, where, in times long past, many good Irish families made settlement. It was there he had married her, she herself being a native Tennesseean sprung from the old Carolina pioneer stock, that had gone into the country near the end of the eighteenth century, along with the Robertsons, Hyneses, Hardings, and Bradfords, leaving to their descendants a certain patent of nobility, or at the least a family name deserving and generally obtaining respect.

In America, as elsewhere, it is not the rule for Irishmen to grow rich, and still more exceptional in the case of an Irish gentleman. When these have riches their hospitality is too apt to take the shade of a spendthrift profuseness, ending in pecuniary embarrassment.

It was so with Captain Jack Clancy, who got wealth with his wife, but soon squandered it upon his own and his wife's friends. The result was a move to Mississippi, where land was at the time cheaper, and where his attenuated fortune enabled him to hold out a little longer.

Still the property he had purchased in Mississippi State was but a poor one; and he was contemplating a further flight into the rich "red lands" of North-eastern Texas, just then becoming famous as a field for colonization. His son Charles had been sent thither on a trip of exploration; had spent twelve months upon the frontier prospecting for their new home; and returned with a report in every way favorable. But the ear, into which it was to have been spoken, could no more hear. Before his return, Captain Clancy was in his coffin; and to the only son there remained only a mother.

This was several weeks antecedent to the tragedy, whose details are already before the reader. Charles had passed the intervening time in endeavoring to console his dearly-beloved and widowed mother, whose grief, pressing heavily, had almost brought her to the grave. It was one of a long series of reverses that had sorely taxed her fortune.

Another of the like, and the tomb might close over her.

Some such presentiment was in her mind on that very day the sun went down, and she sat beside a dim candle, her ear keenly bent to listen for the returning footsteps of her son.

He had been absent since morn. He had gone out deer-stalking, so he had told her. She could spare him for this, and pardon a prolonged absence. She knew he was devoted to the chase; he had been so from a boy; but more than ever since his trip to Texas, where he had imbibed a passion for it—or, rather, cultivated that instinctive to him. While in Texas he had made an expedition to the furthest frontier, and there hunted buffalo and grizzly bear, with trappers and plumed Indians for his companions. Thus inoculated, a man rarely gets over his penchant for the pursuits of St. Hubert. His mother, knowing this, could excuse him for often going out, and even staying late.

But on this occasion he was staying beyond his usual time. It was now night; the deer must have sought their covert; and he had not gone "torch-hunting."

What, then, could he be doing abroad after the sun had forsaken the sky? This was the question, or, rather, the reflection of his widowed mother, as she sat waiting for him.

Only one thing could she think of that might explain the tardiness of his return. The eyes of the mother had been on her son fondly and affectionately, but of late watchful and wary. She had noticed an abstracted air, and heard sighs that seemed to come from his inner heart. Who could mistake the signs of love, either in man or woman? Mrs. Clancy could not, and did not. She saw that her son had fallen into this condition.

Rumors that seemed wafted in the air—signs slight, but significant, perhaps the whisper of a confidential servant—these had given her assurance of the fact: telling her at the same time who had won his affections.

She was not displeased. In all the neighborhood there was no woman she would have more wished for her daughter-in-law than Helen Armstrong. Not from any thought of the girl's great beauty, or even her high social standing. Caroline Clancy was herself too well descended to make much of the latter circumstance. It was the reputed noble character of her son's choice that influenced her approval of it. And when she thought of the girl's own youth, and the stolen interviews with Charles Clancy's father, often in the late dark hours of night—she could not reflect harshly on the absence of that father's son from his home, however late the hour.

It was only when the clock struck twelve she began to think seriously about it. Then came over her a feeling of uneasiness, soon changing to apprehension. Why should he be staying out so late after midnight? The same little bird that brought her tidings of her son's love affair had also told her it was clandestine. Mrs. Clancy might not have liked this. It had the semblance of a slight to their reduced circumstances. But then came up the retrospect of her own days of courtship again to satisfy her. Still, at that hour, Helen Armstrong could not—dared not—be abroad. All the more unlikely that she was going away—as Mrs. Clancy might have thought—early the next morning. The young lady would be long since abed.

This could not be the cause of her son's detention. Something else must be keeping him. What?

Thus ran the reflections of the fond mother. At intervals she started from her seat as some sound reached her from without; each time gliding to the door and peering forth into the darkness—only to be disappointed.

For long spells she stood in the porch, her eye interrogating the road that ran past the cottage, her ear keenly listening for footsteps.

Later there came clear moonlight; but no man, no form, moving underneath it; no sound of coming feet—only dead stillness, saving the nocturnal voices of the forest—the chirp of tree-crickets, the cluck-cluck of frogs, and the shrieking of owls. Among these some sound bearing resemblance to a footfall.

One o'clock, and still silence, or the same monotone of animal sounds, to the mother of Charles Clancy now terribly oppressive, as with keen apprehension she watched for the return of her son.

At short intervals she glanced at the little "Connecticut" clock that ticked over the mantel. A peddler's thing, it might be false, as the men who came south selling them. It was the reflection of a Southern woman, and she hoped the conjecture might be true.

But, as she lingered in the porch, and looked at the waning moon, she knew it must be late—quite two o'clock. And still no fall of footsteps—no son returning.

"Where—where is Charles? What can be keeping him?"

Phases almost identical with those that had fallen from the lips of Helen Armstrong, but a few hours before, as she stood under the magnolia! The place only different, the words prompted by a different passion, but equally strong and perhaps equally pure. Both doomed to disappointment alike hard to bear—alike in cause and yet how dissimilar the impression produced by it. The sweetheart believing herself slighted, forsaken, left without a lover; the mother tortured with the presentiment, she no longer had a son!

When, at an hour between midnight and morning, a dog, besmeared with mud, came crawling through the gate, and she recognized her son's favorite hunting hound, she did not then know it for certain. She could still only have suspicion of the terrible truth. But it was a suspicion, that, to the mother's heart, already filled with foreboding, resembled certainty. Too much for her strength. Weighed and worn with watching, prostrated by the intensity of her vigil, when the dog crawled up the steps of the porch, and under the candle-light she saw his bedraggled form—blood visible among the mud—the sight produced a climax, as might well be expected.

Mrs. Clancy swooned upon the porch, and was carried inside by a faithful slave—the last that was left to her.

CHAPTER XII.

A LAST LOOK AT LOVED SCENES.

LONG before the hour of daybreak, on that same morning, a light wagon, loaded with baggage, passed out from the gate of what had lately been Colonel Arm-

strong's plantation. It was his no more. The mortgage had been foreclosed, and Ephraim Darke was now legally the owner of the Armstrong estates.

Close following the baggage-wagon was a carriage of lighter construction—the old family barouche; inside which were seated Archibald Armstrong and his two daughters. They were all the family he had, and it was the last time they were ever to ride in that carriage, either for airing, or journey.

It was a journey on which they were now bent; not a very long one—only to the port of Natchez, whence a steamboat would convey them, along with other passengers, up the Red River of Louisiana.

The boat was not to start before daybreak; but there were several miles and some rough road between the plantation of Colonel Armstrong and the town of Natchez; hence the early hour of removal from a house, never more to be their home.

The departing planter had chosen the boat, as the hour of his departure, for special reasons. Feeling himself a bankrupt, broken man, he did not desire to be seen leaving his old home under the glaring light of day. Not that he had any fear of being detained. He had satisfied all legal claims, and had still a surplus of wealth—enough to give him a handsome start in Texas. He had converted it into cash, which will account for the accompaniment of only a single wagon, loaded with personal effects, and some endeared objects, such as compose the household gods of every old family; half a dozen male and female slaves—Jule among the latter—being part of the retained chattels. His early start was due to a feeling of sensitiveness, not shame. He shrunk from being stared at in his hour of humiliation.

It was long before daybreak when the two vehicles, transporting him and his, rumbled along the road, or sunk into the mud, at length entering the quaint old city of Natchez, which stands upon one of those very rare projections that surmount the Mississippi river, known as the "Chicasaw Bluffs."

It was still not quite day when he and his belongings, after slowly crawling down the steep hill that leads to the river landing, got aboard the boat; and only full sun-up as the steamer's bell, tolling for the third time, proclaimed departure.

Soon after, Colonel Armstrong and his two daughters, standing upon the "guards" outside the ladies' cabin, looked their last on the city of Natchez, in the best society of which they had for many years mingled, and where for a time Helen had been belle supreme. It was no thought of parting from this pleasant ascendancy—no thought of exchanging her late luxurious life for the log cabin and poverty her father had promised her—that brought the tear into Helen Armstrong's eye. She could have borne all these, and far more—ay, looked forward to them with cheerfulness—had Charles Clancy been true.

He had not, and that was an end of it.

Was it? No; not for her, though it might be for him. In the company of his new sweetheart, the Creole girl of whom Dick Darke had given her the first information—for Helen Armstrong had never heard of her before—he would soon forget the vows he had made and the speeches he had spoken under that magnolia, in retrospect sadder than a cypress.

Would she ever forget him? Could she? No; not unless in Texas, whither she was going, there should be found the fabled Lethean stream. She thought not of this. If she had, it would not have been to believe in the efficacy of its waters. There was no water on earth, nor spirit, that could give oblivion, or solace, to the thoughts that tortured her.

Perhaps not less sad, though very different, were the thoughts that she had but known the truth. If, instead of making that early start from the old plantation home, her father had waited for daybreak, all would have been different—all that affected her reflections. Had the carriage conveying Colonel Armstrong and his daughters rolled along the road when the sun was shining upon it, they would have heard tidings—a tale to thrill all three, but especially Helen. With her it would have proved to the heart's innermost core, displacing the bitterness there already lodged with one alike galling, though of far different kind. Perhaps it might have been easier to endure. Perhaps Helen Armstrong would rather have believed Charles Clancy dead, than to know of his traitorous defection.

Which of the two calamities she would have preferred—preferring neither—there could be no opportunity of testing. Long before it was known that he had been murdered—before the hue and cry was raised, resounding through the settlement—the boat bearing her had steamed far away from the scene of the tragedy.

Little thought she, as she stood on the stern guard, looking back with tearful eyes, that the man making her weep was at that moment lying murdered somewhere in the woods.

Had she known it, there would still have been tears—not of spite, but sorrow.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE CORPSE?

THE sun is up—high up—over the tops of the tallest forest trees. Around the residence of the widow Clancy a crowd has collected. They are mostly men, but with an admixture of half-grown youths and women. They are her nearest neighbors, while those who dwell at a greater distance are still in the act of assembling. Every few minutes two or three horsemen are seen riding up, carrying long rifles over their shoulders, with powder-horns and bullet-pouches strapped across their breasts. Those already upon the ground are similarly armed and accoutered.

The cause of this warlike muster is known to all. That morning, at an early hour, a report had been spread throughout the plantation, that Charles Clancy was missing from his home, under circumstances that justified a suspicion of foul play having befallen him. His mother had sent messengers to and fro; and this had brought the gathering round her house.

It is now ten o'clock of the day, and men have come in from all parts of the settlement; among them Ephraim Darke and his son Richard.

In the South-western States, on occasions of this kind, it does not do for any one to show preference, whatever be his station in life. The proudest or wealthiest planter, as well as the poorest white, is expected to take part in the administration of backwoods justice—some times not strictly en regle with the laws of the land.

For this reason every neighbor, far and near, summoned or not summoned, is pretty sure to be present, as they were on this occasion.

When all, or nearly all, had got upon the ground, the business that brought them together was discussed. This was the search after Charles Clancy, still absent from his home. The mother's story had been already told, and only the late comers had to hear it again. Her son had gone out deer-hunting, as often, almost every day, before. He had taken his favorite hound with him. She knew not in what direction he had gone. It had never been her habit to inquire which way he went on his hunting expeditions. Enough for her that he came home again, which, until that day, he had always done before the going down of the sun. He had never before stayed out after nightfall. He knew she was alone; and, being a good son, always returned within the twilight, if not sooner. Having failed to do so on the night before, she naturally felt uneasy. At a later hour her uneasiness became alarm. Later still she was in a state of agonized apprehension, which came to its climax when, in the gray light of morning, the dog came trotting home, blood-stained and muddy.

The animal was before their eyes, still in the condition spoken of. They could all see it had been shot—the tear of the bullet was visible upon its neck, having cut through the skin. Besides, there was a piece of cord knotted around the dog's throat, the other end looking as if it had been first gnawed by the animal's teeth, and then broken off in a pluck.

These last circumstances had a significance, though no one could explain or even offer a conjecture as to their meaning. It looked as if the dog had been tied up—perhaps to a tree—and afterward succeeded in setting himself loose.

But why tied? And why had he been shot? These were the questions that not anybody could answer.

Strange, too, in the animal having come home at the hour it did. Its missing master was never abroad after sunset—his mother assured them. If any thing had happened to him before that hour—any thing to separate him from the dog and keep him back—why had the latter delayed returning home? Charles Clancy had gone out early in the afternoon. He could not have been hunting at such a distance from the house for his hound to have been all the night in trotting back to it.

Could Clancy himself have fired the bullet whose mark was seen upon the dog? This was also a point in the preliminary investigation.

Not for long. The question was soon answered. There were old backwoodsmen among the mustered crowd—hunters who knew how to interpret "signs" as exactly as would Champollion an Egyptian hieroglyph. These had examined the score on the hound's skin, and said the bullet must have come from a smooth-bore, and not a rifle. It was known that Charles Clancy never carried a smooth-bore, but always hunted with a rifle.

This was another trace of a significant character. It did not fail to make impression on the minds of the assembled backwoodsmen.

After an hour or so spent in discussing what was best to be done, it was at length agreed to commence search for the missing man. In the presence of his mother no one spoke of searching for his body; though there was a general apprehension that this would be the end of it.

She, most interested of all, had a too true foreboding of it. When her neighbors, starting out on the search, told her to be of good cheer, her heart more truly said to her, she would never see her son again.

On leaving the house, the searchers separated into three distinct parties, intending to take different directions, which they did. With one of these, and the largest, went the dog; an old hunter, named Simeon Woodley, being given the command or conduct of it. It was thought that the animal might be in some way useful, if taken back on the track he had last left—supposing that this could be discovered. Along with Woodley's party went Richard Darke, his father choosing to accompany any answer.

Just as had been conjectured, the dog did prove useful. Once inside the woods the animal, without even setting snout to the ground, started off upon a straight run, going so swiftly that it was difficult for the horsemen to keep up with him.

It put them all into a gallop, which was continued for two miles through woodland to the edge of the swamp. Here it ended, by their all pulling up under a tree—a great buttressed cypress, by the side of which the hound had made stop, and commenced lugubrious baying.

The searchers having got up, dismounted and gathered around the spot, many of them expecting to see the dead body of Charles Clancy.

But there was no body there—dead or alive! Only a large pile of Spanish moss, that appeared to have been recently torn from the branches above. It looked as though it had been cut, collected into a heap, and then scattered apart.

The dog had taken his stand in a central spot, from which the parasite had been disturbed, and there stood, still giving tongue. As they drew closer, and bent their eyes upon the ground, they saw something red upon it. This proved to be blood. It was dark crimson, almost black, and coagulated. Still, it was blood.

From under the edge of the moss-heap protruded the barrel of a gun. On kicking the loose cover aside they saw it was a rifle, of the kind common among backwoodsmen. There were many present, who identified the piece as that which had belonged to Charles Clancy.

More of the moss being removed, a hat was discovered. It was Clancy's. Half a score of the searchers knew his head-covering—could swear to it.

During all this time Richard Darke stood in the background, not taking an active part in the scrutiny. It was strange, too, up to that moment he had been among the foremost and most zealous in the search.

Why did he now hold back? Why stand with pallor upon his cheeks, eyes sunken in their sockets, teeth chattering, as if an ague-chill had suddenly attacked him?

It would have been fortunate for him had no one noticed either his reluctance or changed appearance. But some one had. Simeon Woodley had, and others as well. Despite the obscure light under the shadow of the cypress, Darke's strange behavior and scared looks were observed, and note taken of them.

Something besides—something yet more significant—attracted the attention of his

fellow-searchers. Once or twice, as he approached the spot where the blood had been spilled, the dog sprang toward him with a fierce growl, and continued it until beaten off.

Men made note of the matter, but no comments at the time. They were too much occupied with conjectures as to what had actually occurred. Death to Charles Clancy they were now sure, and they busied themselves in searching for his body.

All around the forest was explored; along the swamp edge; up and down the sides of the sluggish creek that ran near by.

Several hours were spent by them in tramping about, but not a trace could be found of living man or dead body. The searchers only looked for the last. Not one of them had the slightest hope of Charles Clancy being still alive. How could they, with such evidence of his death before their eyes?

Nor was there any doubt about his having been killed. There was no sign to make them think he had committed suicide. All they had yet seen, or knew, pointed to assassination—to stark, downright murder.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 97.)

Laura's Peril: OR, THE WIFE'S VICTORY.

A STORY OF LOVE, FOLLY, AND REPENTANCE.

BY BAILEY T. CAMPBELL,

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

PREPARING FOR JOHN.

WHEN the telegram announcing the illness of John Nevin reached Oak Manor, it threw the family into an excitement which they had not experienced for many a day.

Alice helped her father to get ready to go to the city, while the servants prepared a room for the reception of the invalid, and Mabel sought for bouquets of fresh flowers in the garden. A sick room she thought ought never to be without flowers.

"It's so gloomy," she said to Mrs. Houston, "and flowers are so bright; it is so stale, and flowers are so fresh; it has the smell of drugs, and bouquets are so delightfully aromatic."

When Alice paid her first visit to the scene of preparations, she found the soft muslin curtains drawn aside, flowers wreathed about the statue of Psyche on the mantle, and a bouquet on the little marble table at the head of the bed.

"Ain't it nice and cool and inviting?" asked Mabel. "I'm sure he can't help but get well here."

Yes, Alice thought it very nice indeed; but the curtains needed just the slightest attention; they hung too limp, and were not quite full enough; Psyche ought to present a profile instead of a full front, and the moss basket which hung in the open window was too dry and ought to be sprinkled.

All this she remedied with her own hands, while Mabel smiled quietly, knowing all the time that the necessity for this labor laid in the fact that Alice could not be happy, were other hands than her own to provide for the comfort of John Nevin.

When every thing had been arranged, Alice took a long survey of the apartment, and then it was locked up and the two girls went down-stairs.

Mabel had received a letter from Joe Dormer that morning, and now she went off to the library to answer it, while Alice strolled into the garden to think and dream of John's coming.

Presently she grew tired of the landscape, and began to wonder if every thing in John's room was just as she had left it. The more she wondered the more anxious she became, and finally she determined to satisfy herself. There was no person in the hall nor on the stairs as she groped her way back, in the uncertain twilight, and blushing red, stepped into the vacant chamber.

The delicate fragrance of the flowers Mabel had brought met her on the threshold, and the snowy curtains that drifted away from the windows and lay in folds upon the floor, were just as beautiful and neat as she could have wished them. Still, her fastidious taste, or her desire to be employed, I am not sure which, whispered to her the propriety of looping up the curtains a trifle more, and of rearranging the pillows on the bed in the corner. This she did on tip-toe, gliding like a spirit of order and sympathy everywhere.

When all had been done, when there was not the slightest excuse for her remaining longer, she paused and looked regretfully about her. All at once a sudden desire to press her head on that pillow where his was to lay, took possession of her, and impulsively, as indeed she did every thing, she fell upon her knees by the bedside, burying her face in the down and ruffles, and crying out:

"Oh, John! John Nevin, you can never know—never guess, how much—I love you."

There was a tramping of heavy feet—a staggering, shuffling, heavy tread in the hall below, and Alice leaped to her feet and rushed out on the landing at the head of the wide stairs.

"Who is that—that John?"

No one answered, but she saw her father leaning over a form that two of the hired men were carrying, and then she caught sight of a pale face and drifts of black hair, which she knew too well.

Her first impulse was to rush down and kiss the sick man, but, on second thought, she grew scarlet at the bare idea of doing anything so unmaidenly, and so contented herself with crowding back into a corner to permit the men to pass with their burden.

Then she heard her father say that the journey had made him much worse. She could not go into John's room now; not while all those people were there, and stealing down-stairs unnoticed, she went off to the bluff overlooking the river.

There she sat down and cried; cried because John was worse, cried because society hedged in women so, and prevented her from telling him how much she loved him, how sorry she was that he was sick; and cried, too, that she was nothing but an ignorant, helpless girl, who could do naught but watch and wait for death or convalescence.

"Alice, dear John wants you."

It was Mabel who spoke—kind, gentle Mabel—and Alice grasped her hand and asked, eagerly:

"Does he really want me, Mabel—did he ask for me?"

"Yes," Mabel answered, "he did."

"Is there—is there anybody with him?" This with some hesitation.

"No; not one."

Alice drew a long breath of relief and started for the house. When she reached the door of the sick room, however, she grew strangely timid. She stopped an instant and glanced in. The great round lamp of frosted glass, which depended from the ceiling, was turned down to a glimmer, making objects in the chamber appear very vague and indistinct, but there was light enough to show her where John Nevin lay with his face turned to the wall.

Quietly she slipped in, without making the faintest noise, and stood by the bedside.

John?

He turned quickly; his face looked whiter than marble in the dim light, and his eyes had a glassy glare in them.

"Alice—child!" he exclaimed, reaching out his feverish hand, and resting it upon her head.

"Oh, John, I'm so sorry you're sick."

"There was something very honest in that assertion, and the quivering of the girl's voice thrilled John Nevin through and through. It was something to have a pure, honest, simple girl's love, after all, and he answered:

"I knew you would be sorry, Alice, and believe me, I'm grateful."

"Oh, don't talk that way—of gratitude," she interrupted. "I don't want you to be grateful." Then, not knowing what else to say, she added: "Just please tell me, John, what you want—and don't ask anybody else for anything—will you?"

He promised he would not, and then a silence fell upon them. At length, John said:

"Alice, I think we had better change the programme; there may be danger in coming here, even."

"Danger?"

"Yes; this fever may be, probably is, contagious, and I'd sooner die than have you suffer as I am suffering now."

"And I would rather die, John, than leave you to suffer alone." She spoke calmly.

He reached out his hand and drew hers to him.

"God bless you, darling," he exclaimed, and then he kissed it passionately with his burning lips, while she bowed her head and cried secretly, for joy.

The next morning John was a great deal worse, and on the evening of the fifth day he was raving with delirium.

"It will be a hard matter to bring him around," said the attending physician; "the fever has got such a hold upon him. You see, he hasn't been as careful of himself as he should have been, and when disease fastens itself upon such a man, it is hard to root out."

"But, doctor, don't you think we had better have a consultation?" asked Captain Houston.

The grizzled old doctor smiled.

"As you please," he said; "nothing to me, of course; can have anybody you name; I'm willing, I'm sure, to meet any physician in the county, or out of it."

"But, doctor—"

He waived his gloved hand.

"No offense in the world; it's your privilege to have whomsoever you have the greatest confidence in. I have treated the patient on scientific principles; I have not deceived you as to the danger; if you still feel like trusting me with the case, well and good; if not—"

Captain Houston interrupted him.

"We have the fullest confidence in your skill; the consultation was a mere suggestion."

"Oh, very well," replied the other, a trifle mollified. "I will bring Doctor Ahl with me, in the morning."

He bowed, gravely, at the door, leaped on his horse, and was gone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN CALIFORNIA.

JOE and Adam Dormer sat in the office of the dry-goods house of Dormer & Co., in Sacramento, toward the close of an August day. It was a splendid establishment, filled with goods, some of the finest texture, others more useful than ornamental. Four or five clerks were busy waiting on a group of ladies on the first floor, while upstairs an equal number were in attendance on those who wished to purchase for the mining camps in large quantities, and at wholesale prices.

"Well, Joe," remarked Adam, "who'd have ever thought when we left Ruloville, that we'd ever have such a place as this?"

"I knew," exclaimed Joe, "if we had good luck, and that we have had, in abundance, that we couldn't be long kept down in this country, where brain and muscle are always recognized and liberally rewarded."

"True! true!" answered Adam, glancing admiringly at his handsome son; "but, Joe?"

"Well."

"I was thinking it would be well enough to send for Mabel now. It's kind of lonely, here, by our two selves."

Yes, Joe acknowledged that, and he would like to have Mabel with them, better than any thing else in the world; but then, he thought it would be asking too much of a girl to make such a long sea-voyage alone; and besides, Mabel had a better home where she was.

"But you don't intend her to stay there all the time—do you?" asked Adam, a little impatiently.

"No; not all the time. For that matter another year will do her," replied Joe.

"Then I'll have a good start—twenty-five thousand at least, and then—I'll try to give her a pleasant home myself."

The old man was astonished at the younger man's confident tone, and after a moment he asked:

"Joe, you never asked her—did you?"

"No, never did."

"Then, how do you know?"

"How do I know what?"

"That she'll have you?"

"Oh, I guessed," was the rather jocular reply.

A package for Mr. Joseph Dormer, by Wells, Fargo & Co.'s express, said a clerk, putting his head in at the door.

"From San Francisco, Brown?"

"No, sir—from New York. Will I have the porter carry it back here, sir?"

"Yes—right away," replied Joe. Then, turning to his father, he said: "Ten to one 'tis from Mabel."

He was correct; it was from Mabel; for under the directions was written in a chir-

ograph he knew well, "For Joe, from Mabel."

It was a great flat package, and nimbly flew Joe and Adam's fingers until the wrappings were all torn aside, and then Joe gave a shout of joy.

It was Mabel's picture, painted by George Dalby, almost life-size.

The eyes were blue, the skin soft and peachy-looking, the shoulders, which were bare, white as the baldrice of the skies, and skeins of golden hair seemed to float out from the well-shaped head.

"'Tis her image!" exclaimed Adam, wiping the tears from his eyes; "her very image!"

"Could not be more like her," responded Joe, all the sweet memories of the past stealing over him as he gazed. "God bless her!—more like an angel than a woman."

"Seems as if I could run my fingers through her hair as I used to do," said Adam, after a while. To this Joe made no answer; he was kneeling on the floor before the counterfeit presentment, and was greedily devouring the face before him, when a hand was laid upon his shoulder. Looking up, he met the gaze of Cleve Standish, one of his best customers.

"Ah! Mr. Standish, that you?" said Joe, without moving, but reaching his hand.

"Yes, I myself," replied the tall, sun-browned, handsome man.

"When did you come down from Marysville, Mr. Standish?" asked Adam, rising and brushing the dust from his knees.

"This morning's boat," was the reply. "But what's Dormer, Jr., doing in that posture? Praying, eh?"

Cleve Standish was smiling as he spoke, and Joe smiled too, as he said, "Yes; worshipping at the shrine of innocence and beauty. What do you think of that for a picture?"

He turned the portrait around, and Cleve Standish's eyes fell full upon it.

There must have been something terrible in the painting, or in the gray light that fell upon it, for Cleve Standish's face became white as snow, and he staggered back a pace, clasping his hands in surprise.

"Who—who is this?" he managed to ask.

"What's her name?"

"Well," said Adam, not noticing the other's confusion, "that's the picture of our little Mabel."

"Mabel—Mabel Dormer? Did you say Mabel Dormer?"

"No, sir, I did not, seeing as I couldn't say so without telling a lie. Her name is not Dormer, at all, sir."

"Then she is not your own?"

"No, not my own flesh and blood, but, God bless her pretty face, she's dearer to me than many a man's daughter to him."

But her name? exclaimed Standish.

"Simply Mabel Lynn," answered Joe, turning from his earnest perusal of the portrait.

Cleve shut his eyes an instant, and to himself he repeated that name which had been dead to him for nineteen years. Then he said:

"This picture was taken a great many years ago, when she was quite young."

"Quite young?" repeated Joe; "why, Mr. Standish, what are you talking about? She is quite young yet—eighteen—past only. She don't look older, does she?"

"No, no; not older." Then Cleve Standish passed his hands over his eyes, and added: "I feel out of sorts to-day, gentlemen. I will not purchase now. I will go to the hotel and rest."

The Dormers thought Standish acted very strangely, and when he had gone, Adam remarked:

"I thought he was a te-tot-lar."

"So he," replied Joe. "It ain't liquor that affects him, but memory. Possibly it reminds him of some person he left behind him in the Atlantic States."

"I suppose so," replied Adam, and then there was nothing more said about Standish or his strange manner.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW HE LOVED HER.

WHEN the Dormers returned to their hotel that evening, they brought Mabel's portrait with them. At first, they determined upon hanging it in Joe's chamber, and then, in Adam's, and finally they compromised on the little sitting-room which completed their suite.

"She'll appear more like common property here," protested Adam, and Joe said "yes," although he felt as if his room was, after all, the place where she properly belonged, and could scarce restrain himself from saying as much.

This feeling was considerably shaken, however, on the following day, when he received a letter from Mabel informing him of the sending of the portrait.

"It was painted from memory, by a very dear friend, Mr. George Dalby, whom I think I mentioned in my last as having spent the season with us at Newport."

"It was very kind of him to remember me, and I'm sure I'm grateful enough, as I ought to be. He's such a gay young man, and I know you would like him very much."

Then she branched off to tell of Alice's affection for John Nevin, and wound up by alluding to Laura Roberts's conquest of John, and her trip to Rockledge. "Everybody says she looks very much like me, and, ahem! that she is very beautiful; but this, of course, you will take with several grains of allowance."

She never asked him when he intended returning for her, as she did in all the previous letters, and Joe, full-grown man as he was, bit his lip in vexation.

"She don't care now, I guess," he muttered, "whether I ever go back or not. She's got this painter, Dalby, dancing attendance on her, and that's enough for her."

The more he thought of the matter, the more convinced he became that Mabel cared a great deal more for George Dalby than she did for him, and although he kept the secret from Adam, it made him very miserable for the remainder of the day.

"I will write to her," he said at last, "and tell her just what I think, and ask her to marry me at once. That is the best way; it will bring the affair to a climax, and rid me of these doubts, and if the worst comes to the worst—why, I—God help me, I don't know what I'll do," he moaned aloud.

That evening he sat down immediately in front of Mabel's portrait, and wrote her a long letter. He concealed nothing. In fact, concealment was not in Joe's nature, and when he had it finished, and ready to place in the big envelope, he kissed it passionately as he exclaimed:

"God bless the pretty eyes that will look upon it, and may something like the ten-

derness that is in my heart now, dictate her answer."

A tear, a big, manly tear, fell upon the page, blistering the paper, and then Joe Dormer closed his lips tightly, and the misgiving was ready for the morning mail.

He became more confident now that the task was over, and he had given free expression to his thoughts.

"I would like to see this Dalby," he muttered. "I wonder if he is handsome?" Yes, he felt sure he was; all artists were. "But then, theirs is a sort of effeminate beauty, and few women like effeminate men!"

He glanced into the pier mirror on the opposite wall, and saw a bold, broad forehead, a large, well-shaped nose, a pair of brown, earnest eyes, and full, red lips, partially concealed by a flowing silken beard of a chestnut hue.

He stroked the latter with a hand on which a diamond sparkled, and then, with a smile of self-congratulation, fell to dreaming again—of the old, old days of Ruloville—of the mill and its thundering wheel—of Mabel and her golden hair!

How long he had been dreaming he knew not, but he was awakened from his reverie at last, by a gentle tap on his shoulder, and a voice close beside him said:

"Dormer, excuse me, but I couldn't stay away. I've come back to take another look at your picture."

Joe glanced up and beheld Cleve Standish. He was somewhat astonished, but he managed to hide all evidence of it, and said, with a laugh of welcome:

"You did—eh? Well, I'm glad to see you are interested in my beautiful pet. Here, take this chair. There, now, you have the light full on her."

Thank you.

Standish dropped into the chair, and throwing his head back on the high cushion, fell to a perusal of the face that seemed to look out at him from the frame before him.

Oh, the thoughts that that painted face brought up! Oh, the past that it recalled, of a lovely girl, of a wild youth, of a reckless, desperate woman!

"Will you have a cigar, Standish?"

"No."

"A drop of wine, then?"

"Steady, old boy, you'll spill it," said Joe, noticing how his companion's hand trembled.

Then the red wine gurgled from the silver-throated decanter, and then—crash, it fell upon the carpet, shivered to atoms.

As it did so, a low wail smote upon Joe's ears, and he saw the head of Cleve Standish drop, as if a bullet had whizzed through it.

"My God! Standish—man, what's the matter?"

"Nothing," was the faint response.

"That is, I'm better now—quite well. I'm subject to these spells. Oh, that pain!" He pressed his hand to his heart as he uttered this exclamation, and again his head fell back.

Joe made a motion as if he was about to jerk the bell-cord for aid, but ere he could do so, Cleve caught him by the arm.

"Don't," he said. "I want to speak to you about a serious matter. I'll be better presently. Please give me a little air."

Joe threw up the sash of one of the windows.

"There, that will do. I'm much obliged. I'm giving you a great deal of trouble, but I can't help it, and I trust you will excuse me. Indeed, I know you will when you have heard my story."

"Don't mention trouble," said Joe, feeling that Standish was about to impart to him something of grave interest. "Here, take this wine; it will give you strength, and you appear to need a stimulant badly."

Cleve quaffed the warm wine as he replied:

"Yes, I do need something. Do you know I've not eaten a bite since I saw you last. No, sir, not a bite."

"I will order some refreshments now," exclaimed Joe—"some fried tongue, or—"

"No, not now. You are very kind, but I want to ask you a question first. Where did you become acquainted with this girl—the original of this picture?"

Joe was a little taken aback by the abruptness of the query, but he answered promptly: "We were raised together. She was left at our house one night when she was but a baby, only a few months old."

"Who left her there—how did it come about?"

"Well, to tell you the truth—" Joe hesitated.

"Go on, Mr. Dormer. Do not think my manner or questions impertinent. I have a reason for asking them—a good and sufficient reason."

His words were very earnest, and Joe continued: "Her mother left her there. She was going to Maryland, she said, to join her husband, and passing through Ruloville, where we lived, asked permission to remain over night. Mother of course consented, and the next morning Mabel's mother was missing."

"Run away—eh? In the night, too?"

"Yes, walked off."

"And this woman—the girl's mother—called herself Mabel Lynn, did she?"

"Yes."

"And she looked very much like this picture?"

"I think she did," replied Joe, "but it's so many years ago, and I was a mere child then; I have but an indistinct recollection of the incident."

"True! true!" exclaimed Standish. "But, where is the young lady now?"

"At Captain Houston's, Oak Manor, on the Hudson."

"Ah! yes, Captain Houston. I knew him—that is, I met him in the West once."

Standish paused suddenly, and knitting his brows, looked down on the floor a moment, then he continued: "Pardon me, my good friend. I've been very stupid and ugly to-night, but I have learned something that may help to compensate me for a reckless, misspent youth. I will go home now, and rest a bit; to-morrow I'll come over and tell you the story of my life. It will repay you for the trouble I've given you this evening, for it is a narrative full of fearful events."

Joe was very anxious to hear it now; he felt that it was connected, in some way, with Mabel, but he restrained his curiosity and said:

"I'll be glad to have you come over at any time, Cleve."

He thanked him, and was gone.

When Cleve Standish reached his lodgings, he threw himself into a large armchair and muttered:

"Yes, yes, it must be so—my child—and

Mabel, she is not dead. I'll find her yet; I'll beg her pardon; I'll try and make amends to her for the past. Oh, the past, the bitter, bitter past!"

He covered his face with his hands, and, after a while, the tears trickled through his fingers and fell upon the carpet.

The next morning, at daylight, Cleve Stand

the Rajah, who was all-powerful, as they, the writers, would have to suffer the penalty.

Annexed to these was a proclamation from the Rajah himself.

He announced that in three days more the left ears of the captives would be sent, unless the ransom was on its way to the appointed spot; and so on, successively, till the whole of their bodies should have been cut piece-meal.

The mysterious sending of this dispatch had dreadfully surprised the merchants. They had come to the conclusion to pay the ransom at once, and take their chances of capturing the pirates who came after it.

To this end they had taken up a subscription among all the principal inhabitants of the place, and dispatched three hundred thousand pounds in gold in the Thunderbolt, to be landed at the island and left on the beach.

There was great indignation among the captains of the men of war when the "cowardly surrender," as they called it, of the Singapore merchants was known. They had expected a fight, instead of which, money was to release the captives.

Orders arrived from the commander-in-chief at Singapore to leave Giliolo and come back, and the English and French vessels obeyed the orders of their representatives. The Comanche was the only vessel left on the station, for the merchants had sent a peremptory recall to the "Avenger," in which Claude had come there first. But Peyton himself, with the Bloodhound, was independent. He had determined to cruise about till he found the Red Rajah and rescued Marguerite, if it took him years. Her last words as heard by Ismail: "I do not love you any more. You have deceived me again," still rung in his ears. He was resolved to stay there.

The sensation of cruising in a swift prahu, able to overhaul any thing in the way, was delightful. Claude scoured the Celebes sea all day and all night, and next morning was gladdened with the sight of the clumsy mat sails of a Chinese junk, with a strange prahu close to her.

When the look-out, perched on the end of the lofty luteen yard, gave warning of this fact, it was just dawn.

Peyton rushed out of the little deck cabin and gave an involuntary shout of joy. There was no mistaking the cut of the other's sails. She was a piratical prahu, low and black, with enormous spread of yard. The two vessels were about a mile off, and alongside of each other. There was very little wind, and what there was, was dead astern of the Bloodhound, which was slipping through the water at about eight knots an hour.

Peyton went forward and watched the vessels, while his men were tumbling up to quarters.

The Bloodhound cut through the water with such rapidity, that two minutes more would have brought her up to the enemy; when the crew of the strange prahu suddenly seemed to perceive her; for that vessel parted company with the junk and sailed out.

It was evidently the pirate's intention to fight. Peyton could see the crew mustering on the bamboo fighting-deck. They were the men he was in search of, in their scarlet sarongs and jackets, armed with spears, muskets, and krissees.

Claude Peyton rubbed his hands gleefully.

"Now I have you, scoundrels!" he muttered, and the Bloodhound rushed fiercely to the contest. The stranger was a large, heavy prahu with an outrigger, but by means of the swift and graceful build of the Bloodhound.

That the latter was recognized as an enemy was evident from the vengeful yells of the Malays.

Now the Bloodhound was within a quarter of a mile of the enemy when down went the pirate's masts and sails. The Malays always fight under bare poles, using their sweeps.

Then the strange prahu yawned, and fired a broadside from four *telas* or brass swivel guns, full at the Bloodhound. The grape and canister came crashing and tearing through the slight bulwarks of the little vessel, and tore her foremast considerably, besides wounding several men.

Claude held on his course without firing a shot till within two hundred yards of the pirates, when he hove to.

His turn had come.

The terrible mitrailleuse was trained full upon the pirates, and the storm of balls went crashing through the defenses of the strange prahu, a rain of death pouring on the unhappy Malays. At such a short range the mitrailleuse does its ghastly work to perfection. Peyton trained the piece and veered it from side to side, while two of his men turned the crank and poured in cartridges. From the moment he opened his fire, not a shot was returned from the pirates. The storm of death was too pitiless and unceasing to be faced. The Malays had expected an easy victory. They found an all-powerful and implacable foe.

In two minutes the fighting deck was cleared of its occupants, those who were left alive leaping overboard with yells of terror. The oars were deserted in another minute. No living man could stand to his work amid such a hail of bullets. The victory was complete and decisive, and three cheers from the Americans proclaimed it, as they filled their foremast and swept down once more upon the deserted craft.

The water was full of swimmers trying to escape. Claude tried to save some of them, but the effort was vain. So implacable is the ferocity of a Malay pirate that he prefers death to safety at the hands of his enemy. Several of the sailors who tried to pull their enemies out of the water experienced severe wounds from the latter, the desperate wretches striking at them with their krissees as they grasped them.

Such is Malay nature. It rushes on death with eagerness, but flees from its guns under a heavy fire. It desires only a tangible revenge, and prefers the kris to the musket.

Claude was compelled to let them all drown, while he boarded the prahu. He found her full of dead and dying Malays. Here the same implacable spirit manifested itself. Men at the last gasp from loss of blood crawled like snakes across the deck to stab at the American sailors. In self-defense they were obliged to shoot all the wounded and cast them overboard with the dead.

Huddled up in the corner of the cabin they found a woman, who proved easier to deal with. When Claude had assured her in Malay that she was safe, her gratitude was boundless.

She was a slave, she said, a captive from

a Chinese junk who had been assigned the property of the chief in command of the prahu just taken.

Claude questioned her closely as to the whereabouts of the Red Rajah. She informed him that they had left the fleet only three days before, off the island of Giliolo, where the Rajah had been cruising to watch the movements of the great fire prahu of the white man.

"Every night he used to sail close in," she told him, "to count the numbers of the enemy; and when the 'Burong' (the prahu just taken) left, there was strong talk of attacking the ship left alone, now that the others had gone."

"I hope they will do it," said Claude, when he heard the news. "This Red Rajah will learn a lesson, if he tries to attack me. Come, Mr. Scott, we must be off now. Take half of the men and this captured vessel and we'll sail for Giliolo."

"Hain't we better examine yonder junk first?" said Tom Scott, the mate of the Bloodhound.

"You are right, Scott. We may have some money aboard that belongs to the owner, if I'm not mistaken."

They soon overhauled the junk, and found on board Lippopong, a Canton merchant, who had been compelled to pay a heavy ransom for his son Pong-chew. Lippopong was quite wonderstruck with the terrible execution of the Gatling gun. When told that he could have his money back by searching for it in the Burong he was still more surprised. He did not believe that such disinterestedness was possible.

"Illustrious prince," he said, with many genuflections, "it is easy to see that you are a child of heaven. Any one else would have taken the money for himself, and left poor Lippopong to be satisfied with his son regained. Most illustrious prince! Most noble emperor!"

And Lippopong wallowed on the deck in a transport of gratitude and respect.

From him Claude procured twenty Chinese sailors, whom he placed on board the captured prahu, under command of Tom Scott, with ten Americans, to help him control them and work the ship.

Then the Bloodhound and the Burong spread their sails, and shot away over the sparkling sea toward Giliolo. They had not far to go. The Burong proved to be an excellent sailor, although not so fast as the Bloodhound, and by daylight next morning they had arrived at their old station.

No Comanche was visible.

Claude sailed about all day in vain search. He passed by the little rocky islet where the ransom of the merchants was exposed. To his surprise there it still lay, a little pile of bags on a rock, with a white flag fluttering above it.

Puzzled to make out the whereabouts of the ship, he determined to sail around the island in a wide circle till he should find traces of her. With a look-out at the mast-head, he cruised till dark. Just as the sun set, the distant boom of a heavy gun came across the waters from the east.

CHAPTER XXII

A GOOD FIGHT.

At the sound of that gun Claude started and hurried. The crew of the Bloodhound followed his example, catching the enthusiasm of the moment.

"The Comanche! The Comanche!" was the cry, and a second deep report confirmed their suspicions.

Claude ran up alongside of the Burong, which he instructed to follow as close as she could. Then crowding all sail on the Bloodhound, he turned his course eastward, and sailed toward the sounds. As the darkness came on the wind rose, blowing a stiff ten-knot breeze from the west. The prahu was at her best point of sailing, wing and wing, and skimmed along at a tremendous pace.

The guns could still be heard ahead of them, and the red flashes could be seen, which lighted up the heavens to the eastward, every now and then. Casting the log, Peyton found that he was going eighteen knots an hour, nearly as fast as a North river steamer.

Inside of half an hour, the flashes became plainly visible. They came from several places. The reports, sometimes of heavy guns, at others of lighter pieces, showed that a battle was going on.

Who could it be between, except the Comanche and the Red Rajah?

The prahu seemed to fly through the waters, and yet she went too slow for Claude's impatience.

He paced the deck excitedly, longing to come up with the combatants, praying for more wind all the time. The wind, as if in answer to his prayer, seemed to grow fiercer. As swift and tireless as the animal whose name she bore, the Bloodhound rushed on. Most men would have taken in reefs, for it was blowing quite a gale. Peyton kept every stitch of canvas set, and threw water on the sails to make them hold the wind better.

He kept throwing the log every five minutes, and had the satisfaction of finding that he was going nineteen knots and a half at last.

He was too eagerly employed in watching ahead to notice any thing to starboard or port. He could see the flashes quite plainly now, and the canvas of a large frigate, which he recognized as the Comanche, under close-reefed topsails, and going free. She was firing shots, every now and then, into the midst of a fleet of prahus, that scudded before her like a flock of sheep.

But, unlike the sheep, the prahus were fighting. Claude counted flashes from ten different places; and as he drew nearer could see that they were fighting under sail, an unusual thing for Malays.

The shots from the frigate appeared to be of little effect. The night was dark, the sea heavy. Shooting accurately was an impossibility, for either side; but the pirates had the largest mark to shoot at. Their ordnance was light, being made up of long brass three-pound guns on swivels, known as *telas*. Still, the number of the pieces, each prahu carrying four or six, and their low position in the water, rendered them very annoying to the large ship.

The Bloodhound bore down into the midst of this strife just as the clouds cleared away from the moon, taking the squall with them.

Peyton found himself within a quarter of a mile of the Comanche when the wind fell to a light breeze. He saw the pirates begin to draw away from the large frigate as the breeze fell. The moon illuminated the scene with a flood of silver, across which came the red flashes of the guns once more. Claude could see clearly now. The pirates had been fighting under close-reefed canvas,

and keeping very near to the ship. When the moon shone out, and the squall ceased, they crowded all sail to get away. They had no relish for a square fight in smooth water.

Peyton could see the sailors swarming over the yards of the Comanche, and a cloud of sail descended all over the ship a moment after. He let off a rocket, and his men gave three cheers.

They were answered from the Comanche, and the pirates uttered a tremendous yell.

Now the Bloodhound overhauled the frigate rapidly, passing her almost as if she were standing still, and dashed into the midst of the pirates.

Just at that moment another cloud swept over the face of the moon.

The wind rose rapidly into a second squall, in the midst of which frigate and prahu rushed madly through the seething foam, too busy in looking to their spars to care for each other.

When the squall had passed over, Claude found himself driven half a mile to leeward of the frigate, and some distance in front of the pirates themselves. He wore short round, and hove to, to await the assault that was inevitable.

He had not many minutes to wait, when down came the pirates in a clump, as if intending to run him down. Claude filled his foremast and stood off along the front of their line, till they were within about a quarter of a mile, when he opened fire with the Gatling gun. He was answered by the Bloodhound, and down came his mainsail in a mass of ruin on deck.

But the fall of the mainsail did not prevent the working of the machine gun. As accurately as if nothing was the matter, it continued to grind out its fearful rain of bullets and shells, crashing through bulwarks, tearing through crowds of Malays, and carrying death where it went.

The pirate fleet, as if by one consent, swerved to one side, and dashed past the disabled Bloodhound, not caring to provoke a useless acquaintance with her.

Claude ceased firing as soon as they had passed, and set to work to repair damages.

The fall of the mainsail was easily accounted for. Instead of a mast, a prahu carries a triangle of timber resting on blocks under the bulwarks. This triangle sustains the lateen yard under its apex, and is hauled up or down by strong ropes. One of these ropes had been cut by shot, which brought down mast and yard together by the run.

This damage was soon repaired, but other injuries were more serious. Several three-pound shot, and a quantity of broken iron, had struck the Bloodhound, shattering the reef, and breaking the eastern barrier of the Malay archipelago, with a strong current setting easterly and driving them on the rocks.

Claude looked astern for the Burong. She was about half a mile off, and coming up with the Comanche, which the pirates were leaving. It became evident that the Bloodhound was the only vessel capable of coming up with the pirates and rescuing Marguerite, if it was to be done. True, she was too slightly built to stand much of a fight, but then the Comanche was sure to be up in time to help her if she was in danger of sinking.

Claude placed his hopes on disabling the largest of the prahus and capturing it, in the hope that it might contain the Rajah. He could see no signs, however, of the white sails of the splendid yacht. The fact made him suspect that the Rajah had hidden his prisoners somewhere else.

While he was pacing the deck, occupied with these reflections, he noticed that the Comanche was beginning to creep up to him, even in the light wind that had taken the place of the squalls.

A train of smoke and sparks from the frigate explained the reason of this. The Comanche had got up her steam at last. She had been cruising under canvas when the battle commenced, and it took some time to light the fires, and get the boilers hot.

But now Claude exulted. He himself was coming up with the enemy, and the Comanche was coming up with him, by the assistance of steam.

They kept on their course for half an hour, during which they had both crept up to within about five hundred yards of the pirates.

Then, once more, the Comanche began to fire her nine-inch rifle on the forecable.

With smooth water and a light breeze, the practice was excellent. The very first shot struck one of the pirates full in the stern, traversing the entire length, and knocking a hole into her bow, or rather out of it, as big as a small dining-table.

In an instant she began to sink, amid a wild wail from the devoted crew. The other prahu stood on, leaving the unhappy ones to their fate.

Now the Bloodhound opened fire on the next prahu, sending a stream of balls into her cabin windows, each one in the same place, till the affrighted crew, stricken with superstitious terror, leaped into the sea on all sides.

The victory seemed to be sure, when a shout arose from the prahu; and the whole fleet, now reduced to eight, turned round on their track and hove to, to fight. They seemed to be aware of the impossibility of escape.

The first intimation that Claude received of their intentions was a broadside of three-pound shot, that came crashing through the sides of the Bloodhound, and in one single moment rendered her to a helpless wreck, rapidly sinking. The pirates yelled with triumph as they saw the sails come tumbling down, and realized that their troublesome antagonist was out of the fight.

But, long before she sunk, the Burong had arrived alongside, and the crew were transferred to her, along with the Gatling gun, hastily hauled aboard.

By the time this was done, however, the pirates were all round the Comanche, grappled with her and trying to board.

The great ship stood on her course steadily and majestically, and looked as if she could annihilate her pigmy opponents. But they were far more dangerous than she had given them credit for.

Close alongside, and out of the reach of her guns, they retained their grapple-hooks firmly in the frigate's chains. Evidently they understood how to foul a screw, for a sail was dropped overboard, which very quickly was sucked in by the propeller, and so entangled in it, as to render the machine useless.

They kept up an incessant fire on the

port-holes with small-arms, and made repeated attempts to board. But the fire of revolvers from the Comanche's crew became so heavy, that again and again they fell back.

What might have been the end of the contest there is no telling, had not the rescued Gatling gun on the Burong again come into play.

It was the first thing transferred to the prahu, along with two chests of ammunition. Peyton well knowing its importance at the present time. The Bloodhound sunk in fifty fathoms, full of provisions and water, but the terrible mitrailleuse was saved. And now it came into use, only too opportunely.

The Malays, on the starboard side of the Comanche, assailed by a perfect tempest of balls and shells, were swept away in a moment. They fell as if struck by lightning, in a line of dead and dying men. The few who remained leaped into the sea, to avoid the shower, and four prahus were cleared.

The Burong tacked across the Comanche's stern, and sent a second stream of balls into the mass of yelling combatants clustered on the tall side of the frigate.

Again was the scene repeated. Again the storm of death swept over the pirates, driving them into the sea as the most merciful of the two.

The tall ship and her tiny tender remained victors in the strife, and the pirates were swimming for their lives. But the victory had been won at a heavy cost. The fleet of the Red Rajah was annihilated, but the Burong on her side had fifteen unmounted Americans. Twenty-five had been killed outright or desperately maimed, from the last fire of the pirate fleet.

Claude Peyton was so anxious that he could not wait for the frigate's crew to take possession of her prizes. He dashed alongside and boarded the prahu, rushing from one to another in search of the prisoners he expected to find hidden away there. Pendleton sent a detail of sailors to take charge of the prahu, but nothing was found on board to indicate the presence of prisoners, only dead and dying Malay and Dyak warriors, grim and ferocious to the last, with a few female slaves, the mistresses of the chiefs.

From these they learned what Peyton had suspected before, that the Red Rajah was not in the fleet. It was only a portion of his squadron sent to attack the Comanche and draw off her attention while the Rajah himself proceeded to the rock where lay the ransom.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE YACHT.

The two friends agreed to man a portion of the prizes with sailors from the frigate, and form a fleet to cruise after their former owner. They spent the most of the night in the necessary preparations, and in the morning the fleet was ready to start.

How far they had drifted during the night they did not yet know. Neither course nor reckoning had been noted in the excitement. When morning came they found themselves entangled among the maze of low coral reefs that forms the eastern barrier of the Malay archipelago, with a strong current setting easterly and driving them on the rocks.

To add to their perplexity the wind was very light, and the screw of the propeller was found to be so hopelessly fouled with the sail which the pirates had dropped into the water, that it would be a work of several hours to cut it loose, and in the mean time their steam engine was useless.

There was nothing for it but to beat out of the surrounding shoals under sail, and wait till they were out of danger to free the screw. They had drifted into a sea of shoals as yet unsurveyed, and which they had much difficulty in getting out of.

At last, about noon, they had the satisfaction of seeing the shoals to the south and east left astern, while the only remaining one was a long reef to the north that stretched as a barrier for several miles ahead.

Then it was that the look-out at the frigate's main top-gallant cross-trees shouted: "Sail, ho! A prahu on the starboard bow!"

Pendleton himself scampered up the rigging, glass in hand, to inspect the stranger.

The vessel was on the port tack, with four of the swiftest prahus following her, headed by the Burong, with her redoubtable mitrailleuse. The rest of the prizes had been burnt or scuttled.

The wind was dead in their teeth, and the strange prahu was coming down before it on the other side of the barrier reef before mentioned. Both parties were approaching each other rapidly. The captain watched the prahu keenly, till he heard a voice beside him, exclaiming:

"The Rajah, by all the powers!"

Pendleton looked round. Claude Peyton stood on the cross-trees beside him, holding on by a stay, and gazing eagerly at the stranger.

"See, Horace!" he ejaculated, "it is she! The very self-same yacht, all white and gold, and so swift and beautiful, that lay in the harbor at Singapore. And by heavens! Look close! Now you can see him plain. It's the man himself, that audacious villain, the Red Rajah!"

Indeed it was true. The lovely yacht, all white and gold, with snowy sails of fine duck, was dashing along on the other side of the barrier-reef, swift as a sea-gull.

Even while they looked, they could see the tall, slight figure of the Rajah, in his full Malay dress of scarlet and gold. He was standing on the quarter-deck of one of the twin boats composing his prahu-yacht, smoking a cigar, and close enough for them to see his face plainly, with a first-rate glass.

Pendleton shouted down to the deck: "Ready the forecable gun, there! Give the impudent villain a shot! Hurry, now!"

The order was obeyed in a twinkling. The great gun was cast loose and pointed.

There was a flash, and a heavy report. The nine-inch shell went skipping over the waves, and burst into fragments with a loud explosion, as it struck the coral reef. It was aimed too low.

Pendleton swore a great oath.

The Red Rajah lifted his hand, and waved it in a mocking adieu.

Then Claude Peyton swore louder than the other.

A female figure had come out of the yacht's cabin, and stood by the Rajah. It was Marguerite.

Claude felt sick with jealousy and anguish, as he saw her, and saw the Rajah putting his arm around her, caressingly.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 92.)

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OFF-UL.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Once a young Russian nobleman,
M. Outosock, the son of
An officer of the frontier clan,
Old Bustissnootarunoff,
Was weak enough to fall in love
With Man'sie Orfinski,
Who was the only daughter of
The tanner, Jug-o-l-e-k.

But she already was engaged
To Monsieur Nockmishoff,
Who was the nephew of the aged
Assessor Omilwizoff.
The day already had been set;
The priest, old Chavmearzoff,
Was spoken to tie the knot
Along with Neverswearzoff.

The guests had even got their bids,
Among them, Smetomuski,
The keeper of the royal kids,
And lawyer Dryumski.
And all the big bugs of the town
From Mayor Blominozoff,
Who was to give the bride, on down
To Cumanbrushmichiozoff.

Seeing all was up, the groom refused.
His cruel of cod-liver;
And, since she had her vow abused,
Swore he would not forgive her,
And challenged this young Outosocks
Through Colonel Nockmishoff;
It was accepted by his friend,
Lieutenant Sawmishinoff.

That morn each made a hasty meal
Of soap-grease, oil of castor,
And with their swords sought to reveal
Which one of them was master.
Young Outosocks was killed, and Nock-
mishoff, dreading scandal,
Then blew his brains out on the spot
With a two-cent tallow candle.

When Orfinski heard their fate,<
Of Dr. Solemkoff,
She bought of arsenic two-ounce weight,
On suicide bent solely.
Confessed her sin, which were some scores,
To father Slumberzy,
Then poured the poison out-of doors
And married Koffansky.

A Ride with a Madman.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

QUITE late in the afternoon, Miss Almyr, a beautiful young seamstress, received a telegram which informed her that her only brother was dying at Washington, ninety miles away.

Sisterly affection said that she must soothe that dying brother's pillow, and hear the last words he had to utter, ere he left her brotherless in this wide world.

She examined her little purse, and discovered that her worldly wealth amounted to but three dollars, while the railroad fare to Washington was considerably over four.

Yet, Oscar must gaze upon her face before he died; she must kiss his lips before they became cold in death.

Miss Almyr had a lover, to whom, with great delicacy, she went and made known her situation.

Ward Nichols was "well to do in the world," as folks say, and, with a look of pity, for the veil of affliction was about to enshroud Miss Almyr, he gave her a twenty-dollar bank note, and hoped that Oscar would not die.

He did more than this. He accompanied her to the central depot, and saw her on the car.

"I wish I were going with you to-night," he said, as he took her hand to say good-by. "As you know, disreputable characters ply their nefarious callings on this road. But I can not leave the office, the more's the pity. Take this, then; you may need it," and he thrust the tiniest of six-shooters into her hand.

She put it in the pocket of her dress, and thanked him.

Then, as the cars were moving off, he left her, and presently she seemed to be flying over the road.

The lamps were already lit, and Miss Almyr glanced around at her fellow-passengers. They were but three in number, two women and one man. The former alighted at the first station, but the latter remained in the coach, his head bowed upon the back of the seat.

Presently the conductor entered the coach, and said to Miss Almyr:

"Miss, I shall lock the doors of the coach, as I leave it. It is a precaution which you must take on this road. The gentleman sleeping yonder is going to Washington, and he will not disturb you."

Miss Almyr did not relish the idea of riding ninety dreary miles with a strange man, and under lock and key. But she did not permit her complaints to gain utterance, and, after a while, the conductor left the coach, locking the door as he did so.

On, on, thundered the train, and Miss Almyr leaned back in the seat, and never took her eyes off her fellow-traveler. A thought had intruded itself upon her mind that he was an evil-disposed individual, with whom she was fated to have some trouble before she reached her destination.

Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly to Miss Almyr, the man raised his head, and fastened his eyes upon her, as though he were trying to read the secrets of her heart. For awhile there was nothing unnatural in the look, when a wild light took possession of his dark eyes, and Miss Almyr almost sprung to her feet with a shriek of terror.

His suddenly altered countenance sent a terrible revelation, like a flash of lightning, across her already burdened mind.

She was under lock and key with a maniac!

Her first impulse was to throw up the single sash and call for help, but she did not obey it. A second thought told her that the roar of the train would prevent her cry from reaching aid.

There was nothing left for her to do but to face the madman, and this she firmly resolved to do as became a brave little woman.

With wonderful calmness she drew Ward's revolver and cocked it. She recollected his words, "You may need it," and wished that God would bless him for his thoughtfulness.

For some minutes after noticing his fellow-traveler the man did not stir. At the end of that time he slowly rose to his feet, and again fastened his demoniac eye upon Miss Almyr.

"After years of terrible toil," he said, addressing her in a tone which seemed to turn her blood to ice, "I have perfected my star ship, the greatest invention of modern times. For five hundred years I have toiled over the ship. Her sails are beaten silver, her masts the strongest cedars on Lebanon's hills, and her mighty engines are made of gold; the piston-rod is studded with diamonds. But one thing I lack—but one thing—the propelling power."

He paused; but Miss Almyr did not speak.

"Blood—a virgin's blood, shall be the

propelling power of my star ship," he suddenly exclaimed. "It heats quicker than water, and when once heated, it will send my vessel to the most distant star with the rapidity of lightning."

Miss Almyr shuddered at the maniac's horrible thoughts, and conceived the plan of gaining time by entering into a conversation with him. She had read, somewhere, of persons drawing maniacs from the soul-absorbing thoughts that eternally haunted them, and thereby saving their lives. The train was rushing over a level road at a momentum of thirty-three miles an hour, and at any moment the conductor was liable to enter the coach.

"Are you going to Wingarten?" she asked, calmly meeting his gaze.

"To Wingarten?" he thundered. "No! I'm going in my star ship to Polaris. I have an invitation to sup with the monarch of the North star. Then I will chase Ursula Major through the heavens, and out-sail the Argo. Oh, won't such feats be grand, grand, grand! I'll sail through the milky-way, and astonish the inhabitants of those millions of spheres. Yes, I will do all this when I have obtained the propelling power a virgin's blood! I must have it. Fate has placed it in my power. I will tap your veins first, and then I'll drain the arteries!"

He stepped toward Miss Almyr with drawn razor, laughing fiendishly over the expected culmination of his cherished crazy plans.

"Back!" cried the seamstress, leveling the revolver. "Back, madman, or I will shoot you!"

He did not seem to have heard her warning, for he came on.

"Blood, blood!" he cried, brandishing aloft the razor. "My enterprise must not fail for the want of the great propelling power. I must keep my appointment with the king of the polar star."

He was almost within the reach of Miss Almyr when she fired.

The demon sunk to the floor of the coach, blood issuing from a wound on the temple.

"Blood!" he cried, gazing upon some of his own gore which stained his hand; "but not mine, no, not mine!"

He sprang to his feet, and darted at Miss Almyr. A second ball from the revolver entered his breast, and with a yell of agony, he staggered back.

What he would have accomplished—for his last wound, like his first, was not mortal—I do not know; but before he could rise, the door was thrown wide open, and the conductor rushed into the coach.

With the aid of a brakeman, who followed him, he bound the madman, and carried him into the baggage-car. Overjoyed at her delivery, Miss Almyr sunk back with nerves unstrung, and presently the train paused at Wingarten.

Two officers were waiting for the maniac. A telegram from Hope Asylum had been received, which ordered the arrest of Giles Greenwood, an escaped lunatic, who was pronounced "dangerous."

Miss Almyr closed her brother's eyes in death that night; and followed him to the tomb.

Then she returned to her little shop, and, after a while, became the wife of Ward Nichols.

The maniac has since died in Hope Asylum, while his almost victim lives to relate the story of her night-journey to Wingarten.

It has been said that an Irishman is at peace when he is in a quarrel; a Scotchman at home only when he is abroad; an Englishman contented only when finding fault with something or somebody; and a busy, bustling, impetuous American is at the height of felicity only while he is in all these tumultuous conditions at the same time.

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Over this spring Mr. Hardin had caused to be erected a small stone building, the lower part of which served as a "milk house," while the upper room had been fitted up luxuriously for the use of its owner.

Here in the hot summer days would congregate a select circle of friends, who, to kill time, were in the habit of resorting to a certain game known as Old Sledge, during the progress of which the sable water would hand round a delicious compound, skillfully concocted from old Bourbon, sugar, and the fragrant mint that grew luxuriantly about the mossy rocks beneath.

To this charming spot the host conducted Davy, after leaving the grove where the shooting had taken place, and immediately the services of the sable compounder of mint juleps were called into requisition.

On that occasion Pompey excelled even himself.

The beverage was not only palatable, it was delicious, enchanting, and certainly most deceptive.

Davy had never before been so blessed. He was in the habit of taking it "straight jess so," and so it followed that glass after glass of the treacherous liquid was passed to the great hunter, and by him passed out of sight.

Mr. Hardin drank but sparingly, indeed he never did otherwise, and hence when the time came to adjourn to the grove once more, his walk was steady and his arm firm to aid the somewhat uncertain footsteps of his guest.

Davy, totally unconscious that anything "out of the way" was affecting his head or eyesight, was eager for the match to commence.

The crowd assembled rapidly, and soon the sharp, whip-like reports of the rifle were again sounding in the grove.

Davy shot badly, very badly, and the more he shot, the worse his shooting became.

He was utterly bewildered. Never before had such a thing happened to him, and finally, as Mr. Hardin, who was now his opponent, placed bullet after bullet closer in than he had done, he got mad.

But, it was no use. His gun was bewitched, or he was, he didn't know which.

Suddenly a thought seemed to strike him; he had "got the trail" and, springing upon a stump, he jerked off his coon-skin cap, and addressed the amused spectators:

"I've been beat shootin'!" he yelled. "Me, Davy Crockett, the game-cock uv old Salt river! But, it ain't been done fair, by ther backskins uv old Hick'ry, it ain't a 'suar' match! I kin outshoot any livin' man, but I tell you, ther ain't a feller livin' as kin shoot ag'in Ben Hardin an' his stone spring house, with a round-headed nigger an' a gallon uv 'Bled corn pizened with rag-weeds throwed into ther bargin'! Ther ain't, by the everlastin' constitution!"

The day dawned clear and bright, and at an early hour the shooting commenced. If there had been any hopes of beating the "champion" they were very soon blighted, for ball after ball did the great marksman send through the center of his target, not one varying the width of a hair, and hence making it a matter of impossibility for any to do better.

Noon came, and the multitude dispersed for dinner, with the understanding that the shooting would be resumed in the cool of the afternoon. Of all who had striven that day to excel the visitor, none had tried so hard or so persistently as Ben Hardin. He had done magnificent shooting, but it was not up to the mark. Once or twice his ball had wandered a little and so lost him the honor.

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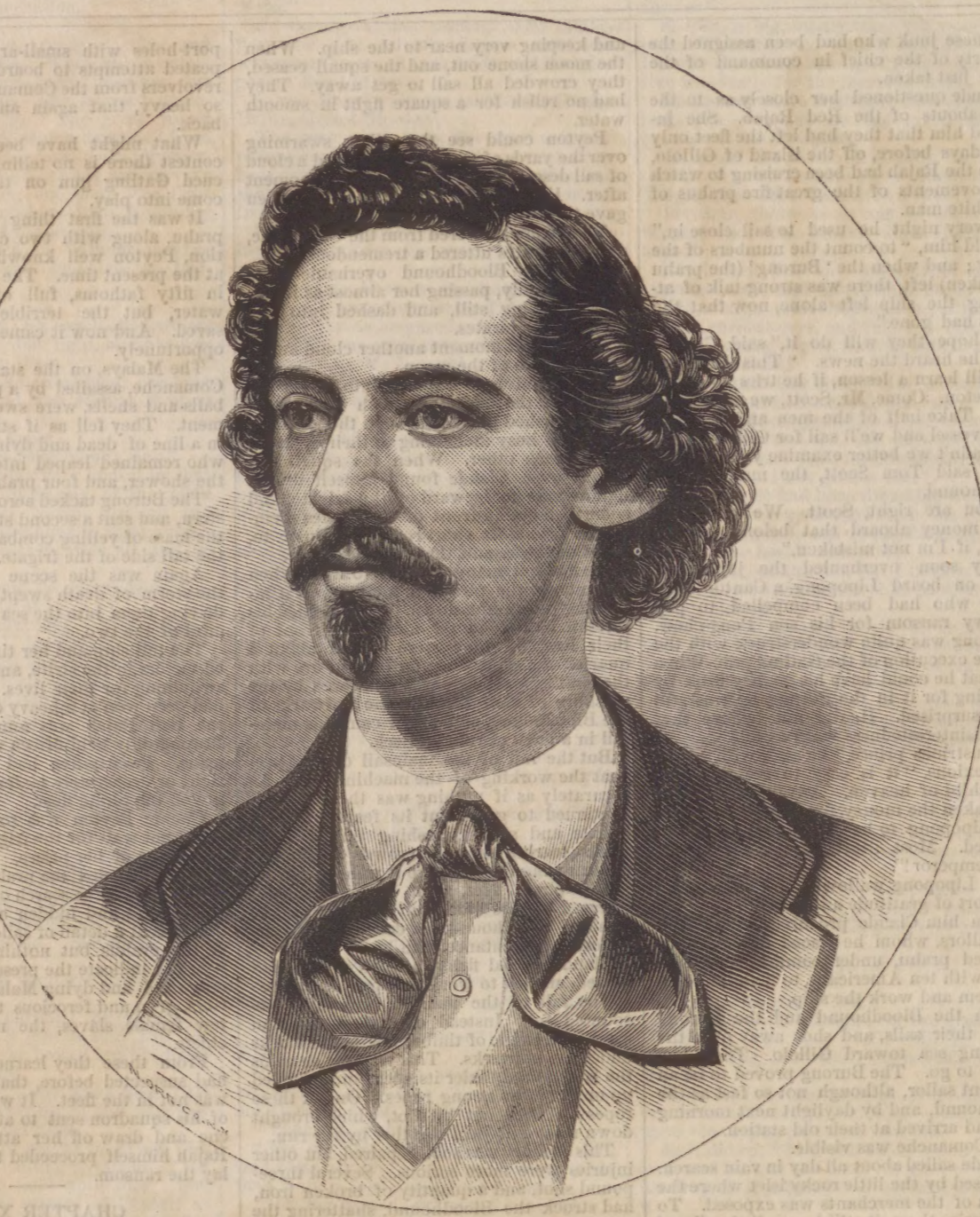
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Recollections of the West.

How Ben Hardin beat Davy Crockett Shooting.

BY CAPT. BRUN ADAMS.

So skillful was Davy Crockett in the use of the rifle, that it finally came to be a matter of doubt as to whether he could miss anything at which his rifle was pointed.

The only time that he was ever beaten was by the celebrated Ben Hardin, of Kentucky, a warm friend of Crockett's, and he only succeeded in doing so by playing a trick upon the great woodsman. At that time the village of Bardstown, Kentucky, was famous all over the country for the great number of unusually skillful rifle-shooters residing in the town, or in its immediate vicinity.

There were such men as Fennel White, General Simpson, Col. John Rowan, and others, names well known in the West, who regularly, once a week, assembled in Beal's grove, and "shot the day away."

The marksman who could not drive center at least three times in every five, was not considered as worthy to take part in the "matches," and such were invariably excluded, as being certain to lose the money.

Mr. Hardin was considered a crack shot, though not equal to those whom I have mentioned; nevertheless, he could boast of having done what no other man ever did with a rifle, namely, beating Davy Crockett "two best in three, sixty yards, off hand."

It seems that the fame of these Nelson county marksmen had penetrated into the fastnesses of the great Salt River Hills, the stamping-ground of Davy Crockett, and the story having reached his ears, he one day shouldered his rifle and "stepped over" to see if these riflemen were really what report said they were.

The town of Bardstown was, on that Saturday morning, in a condition of excitement such as had never before stirred its humdrum, everyday course of life.

All the day previous there had been a clearing of rifles, molding of bullets that should have no flaw in them, making of targets, and filling of powder-horns for the coming contest.

Everybody there knew what Davy Crockett could do with the rifle, but they also knew that there were those of their townsmen who could do nearly as much, and perhaps, by a "lucky streak," come quite up to the required standard, which was to drive center every time.

Davy was the guest of his friend Mr. Hardin, whose fine residence was situated upon a hill on the outskirts of and overlooking the town, and thither the dusty traveler was conveyed, the evening before the match.

The day dawned clear and bright, and at an early hour the shooting commenced. If there had been any hopes of beating the "champion" they were very soon blighted, for ball after ball did the great marksman send through the center of his target, not one varying the width of a hair, and hence making it a matter of impossibility for any to do better.

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The new hemisphere. For this purpose, they purchased the charter of the English North Virginia Company. Forty-one families, making in all one hundred and twenty persons, landed in the beginning of a very hard winter, and found a country entirely covered with wood, which offered a very melancholy prospect to men already exhausted with the fatigue of their voyage. The weather held tolerable until the 24th of December; but the cold then came on with violence. Such a Christmas-eve they had never seen before. From that time to the 10th of February, their chief care was to keep themselves warm, and as comfortable in other respects as their scanty provisions would permit. The poorer sort, were much exposed, lying in tents and miserable hovels; and many of them died of scurvy and other distempers. They were so short of provisions, that many of them were obliged to live upon clams, mussels, and other shell-fish, with ground nuts and acorns instead of bread. One that came to the Governor's house to complain of his sufferings, was prevented, being informed that even there the last batch was in the oven. Some instances are mentioned of great calmness and resignation in this distress. A good man, who had asked his neighbor for a dish of clams, after dinner returned thanks to God, who had given him to suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasure hid in the sands. Nearly one-half of them perished, either by cold, the scurvy, or other distress. The courage of the rest began to fail, when it was revived by the arrival of sixty Indian warriors, who came to them in the spring, headed by their chief. The old occupants assigned forever to the new ones, all the lands in the neighborhood of the settlement they had formed, under the name of New Plymouth; and the Indians, who understood a little English, staid to teach them how to cultivate the maize, and instruct them in the manner of fishing upon their coast.

This kindness enabled the exiles to wait for the companions they expected from Europe with seeds, domestic animals, and every assistance they wanted. At first, these succors arrived but slowly; until the persecution of the Puritans in England increased the number of refugees to such a degree in America, that in 1630 they were obliged to form different settlements, of which Boston soon became the principal. These first settlers were not merely ecclesiastics, who had been deprived of their preferments on account of their opinions. There were among them several persons of high rank, who having embraced Puritanism, had taken the precaution to secure themselves an asylum in these distant regions. They had caused lands to be cleared, and houses to be built; with a view of retiring there, if their endeavors in the cause of civil and religious liberty should prove abortive.

The new colony lived peaceably for a long time, without any regular form of policy. At length, they grew sensible of the necessity of a regular legislation; and this great work, which virtue and genius united have never attempted but with diffidence, was boldly undertaken by blind fanaticism. There was in this new code a singular mixture of good and evil, of wisdom and folly; and it bore the stamp of the hereditary prejudices on which it had been formed. No man was allowed to have a share in the government, except he were a member of the established church. Witchcraft, perjury, and blasphemy, were made capital offenses; and children were also punished with death, for cursing or striking their parents. All who were detected, either in lying, drunkenness, or dancing, were ordered to be publicly whipped; but, at the same time that amusements were forbidden equally with vices and crimes, a person might be allowed to swear by paying a penalty of 11 3-4d.; and to break the Sabbath for 2s. 10s. 9-14d. Another indulgence was to atone by a fine for a neglect of prayer, or for uttering a rash oath; but it is still more extraordinary, that the worship of images was forbidden to the Puritans, on pain of death, which was also inflicted on Roman Catholic priests, who should return to the colony after they had been banished; and on Quakers, who should appear again after having been whipped, branded, and expelled.

Those unfortunate members of the community who, less violent than their brethren, ventured to deny the coercive power of the magistrate in matters of religion, were persecuted with the utmost rigor. Every difference of opinion was attempted to be stopped, by the infliction of capital punishment on all who dissented. This intemperate religious zeal, extended itself to matters in themselves the most trifling, as will appear from the following public declaration, which is transcribed from the registers of the colony. It states it to be "a circumstance universally acknowledged, that the custom of wearing long hair, after the manner of immoral persons, and of the savage Indians, can have been introduced into England only in sacrilegious contempt of the express command of God; who declares, that it is a shameful practice for any man who has the least care for his soul, to wear long hair. As this abomination excites to indignation of a pious person, we the magistrates, in our zeal for the purity of the faith, do expressly and authentically declare, that we condemn the impious custom of letting the hair grow; a custom which we look upon to be very indecent and dishonest; which horribly disguises men, and is offensive to modest persons, inasmuch as it corrupts good manners. We therefore being justly incensed against this scandalous custom, do desire, advise, and earnestly request, all the elders of our church, zealously to bow their aversion for this odious practice, to exert all their power to put a stop to it, and especially to take care that the members of their churches be not infected with it; in order that those persons who, notwithstanding these rigorous provisions, and the means of correction that shall be used on this account, shall still persist in this custom, shall have both God and man at the same time against them."

This severity soon exerted itself against the Quakers, who were whipped, banished, and imprisoned. The behavior of these new enthusiasts, who, in the midst of tortures and ignominy, praised God, and called for blessings upon men, inspired a reverence for their persons and opinions, and gained them a number of proselytes; but still the spirit of persecution was not abated; those persons who were either convicted or even suspected of entertaining sentiments of toleration, were exposed to such cruel oppressions, that they were forced to fly from their first asylum, and seek refuge in another. They found one on the same continent; and as New England had been first founded by persecution, so were its limits extended by it.

The Pilgrims.—In the year 1610, some Brownists, headed by Mr. Robinson, whom Neal styles the Father of the Independents, being driven from England by persecution, fled to Holland, and settled at Leyden; but in 1621 they determined, in conjunction with Mr. Brewster, assistant preacher to Mr. Robinson, to found a church for their sect in

the new hemisphere. For this purpose, they purchased the charter of the English North Virginia Company. Forty-one families, making in all one hundred and twenty persons, landed in the beginning of a very hard winter, and found a country entirely covered with wood, which offered a very melancholy prospect to men already exhausted with the fatigue of their voyage. The weather held tolerable until the 24th of December; but the cold then came on with violence. Such a Christmas-eve they had never seen before. From that time to the 10th of February, their chief care was to keep themselves warm, and as comfortable in other respects as their scanty provisions would permit. The poorer sort, were much exposed, lying in tents and miserable hovels; and many of them died of scurvy and other distempers. They were so short of provisions, that many of them were obliged to live upon clams, mussels, and other shell-fish, with ground nuts and acorns instead of bread. One that came to the Governor's house to complain of his sufferings, was prevented, being informed that even there the last batch was in the oven. Some instances are mentioned of great calmness and resignation in this distress. A good man, who had asked his neighbor for a dish of clams, after dinner returned thanks to God, who had given him to suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasure hid in the sands. Nearly one-half of them perished, either by cold, the scurvy, or other distress. The courage of the rest began to fail, when it was revived by the arrival of sixty Indian warriors, who came to them in the spring, headed by their chief. The old occupants assigned forever to the new ones, all the lands in the neighborhood of the settlement they had formed, under the name of New Plymouth; and the Indians, who understood a little English, staid to teach them how to cultivate the maize, and instruct them in the manner of fishing upon their coast.

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